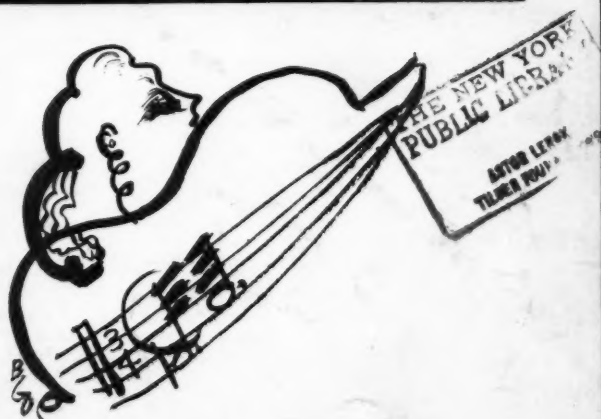


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The American RECORD GUIDE



APRIL, 1954

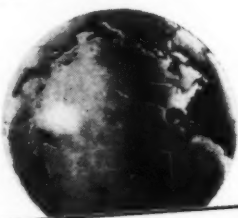
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Toscanini and Beethoven

BEETHOVEN: *Missa Solemnis*; Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra with Lois Marshall (soprano), Nan Merriman (mezzo-soprano), Eugene Conley (tenor), Jerome Hines (bass) and The Robert Shaw Chorale. RCA Victor LP set LM-6013, 2 discs, \$11.90.

▲AT LONG LAST the work is accomplished. For nearly two decades, those of us for whom the phonograph has been a haven of spiritual resuscitation from the turmoils of conflicting living have awaited a recording of Toscanini's performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*, not so much for his substantiation of its religious significance but for his intensified feeling for its human drama. Each time that Toscanini performed the work in public, it was believed that his performance would be recorded. Each time, he refused for one reason or another to sanction its release.

Perhaps it was well that Toscanini waited as long as he did, for the longer he performed this work the more he discovered in it, and the more eloquent his interpretation became. With regard to music, Toscanini is strangely humble at times and given to saying that this or that performance was not satisfactory because he felt that he had not fully understood certain sections of a work. Well, a lifetime of experience reveals, to a musician as searching and as thorough in his probing as Toscanini is, many things. Always he recognized the *Missa*

Solemnis as a virtuosic work which dealt more strongly than any other with the drama of human suffering and aspiration. Always he coordinated its passions and fervor, its sacred as well as human implications, with amazing control and unparalleled tension. This latest performance by Toscanini reveals all these things and more—for there is here often a lessening of tension, without loss of control, which conveys more a heartfelt feeling for the assuaging pages of the music. His wondrous feeling for the *Sanctus* and the *Praeludium* that leads into the *Benedictus*—indeed his playing of the latter for all the aggressive tone of the solo violin—reveals a tenderness more moving than ever before.

But to start at the beginning, the *Kyrie* has greater heart than ever before; the lamentative *Crucifixus* is more deeply touching; and the final pages from the *Agnus Dei* to the *Dona nobis pacem* are probed with that expressive strength under control that only Toscanini can summon when he is moved to do so.

By far, this is his finest achievement for the phonograph and by far the most satisfactorily recorded. Soundwise, there can be no complaints—the orchestral playing sounds more natural than in the *Ninth* and other recently recorded symphonies, the chorus is properly balanced and the soloists are in proper perspective. The Robert Shaw Chorale sings wonderfully, better than in the finale of the *Ninth*. The soloists are all good, but especial mention to Merriman

and Hines should be given. Miss Marshall, a Canadian importation, has a clear, strong voice which sometimes dominates, but her ability to sing truly and with apparent ease is as much an asset as sometimes her power is not. Conley is less distinguished in his part, though capable enough. So, all things added together, this is the greatest contribution of Toscanini's art to recording.

—P.H.R.

SIBELIUS

"... alone with nature's breathing things"

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 4 in A minor, Op. 63*; Stockholm Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sixten Ehrling. Mercury LP MG-10143, \$4.85.

▲THIS is the first LP release of Sibelius' most personal and undoubtedly provocative treatment of dealing with symphonic structure. This is probably one of the most misunderstood works by Sibelius. It has been labelled a work of deepest "tragedy and gloom" by well-meaning writers who regard Sibelius as the greatest symphonist since Beethoven. Two years after he wrote this work (1913), Sibelius in a letter to Rosa Newmarch said that this symphony "stands out as a protest against the compositions of today. Nothing, absolutely nothing, of the circus about it." He was greatly opposed to the post-Wagnerian style of so many musicians of that day, as well he might have been. Mrs. Newmarch was nearer to the truth of this symphony's inspira-

tion when she said that Sibelius was "alone with nature's breathing things." Nature—one suspects—might afford a formidable study in Finland, and a source of endless and bewildering contemplation. Observing its unceasing changes, its many wonders and its contrasts, could provoke brooding and rumination in a composer like Sibelius, for whom nature has always been a compelling force. One writer has said that his work conveys a "complicated mental conflict," but the complicated conflict lies in nature. When I first heard this work I accepted it on the basis of serious writers of the day as one of deepest tragedy and gloom. Through the years, I have discarded this idea. The forces of nature began to manifest themselves and I found in this music a true manifestation of deepest contemplation of those forces by the composer. One can understand why the composer claims it means so much to him personally, for here he has striven to penetrate the great wonder of the universe and convey its alternating effects on him. Conflicting emotions prevail in the opening and slow movements. The scherzo and finale are released from similar tension; they are brighter and more lighthearted. For me, this symphony is one of the most adventurous ones in the whole symphonic repertoire and inevitably seems all too short.

The performance is a fine one; Ehrling phrases with skill and understanding and his orchestra performs splendidly. The recording is most realistic for its clarity and balance—you can distinguish every instrument. Mercury's quiet surfaces leave the mind of the listener completely on the music.

—P.H.R.

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The Singers' Toll for 1953

by Leo Riemans

Part 2

IT IS said that people who retire after a busy life invariably die within the year. Whether true or false, it applies to **Virgilio Lazzari**, who made his American farewell appearances in 1952, the year before he died. He sang for 20 years at the Metropolitan after some 15 years with the Chicago Opera. He was always better known in America than in Europe, but during the 1930's he suddenly achieved Continental fame through his Salzburg appearances as Pinstola in Toscanini's *Falstaff* and Leoporello and Dr. Bartolo in Bruno Walter's *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*. In Italy, he was regarded as a specialist in the role of the blind King Archibaldo in *L'Amore dei tre re*. This certainly was his most striking role, which he sang as recently as March of 1953 at Genoa (after his American farewell) apparently as a resumption of his Italian career. Considering the length of his career, it is strange that so few recordings exist of his voice. Between 1917 and 1919 he recorded for Edison, but only four sides are known to me. He later made some recordings for Vocalion, and that was all. Nothing between 1923 and 1946, except for some semi-private recordings taken from the air in 1940. By virtue of the last, we at least have his Leoporello aria preserved, though carelessly recorded, minus first and last notes. Someday, I hope, some of the broadcast opera performances of the Metropolitan in the 1930s and early 1940s may be resurrected and issued as LPs, more or less like the vintage 1939 Mengerberg *Matthaeus Passion*. No doubt this may happen in the distant future (like the Mapleson cylinders after nearly a half century), but even today they would contain some cherishable mementoes. And among them would be souvenirs of Lazzari.

De Seguerola

ANOTHER bass, of a past generation, who died in 1953 was **Andres Perello De Seguerola**, long associated with the Metropolitan during its most glorious years—the time of Gatti-Casazza, Caruso and Toscanini. He had a long career, though in his last years he became associated mainly with Hollywood, where he taught singing. Deanna Durbin was a pupil of his. It is well to remember that Lilli Lehmann held him in the highest esteem, and in her *Memoirs* devotes a whole page to his insuperable Leoporello. She invited him to sing

this role at Salzburg in 1910 (with herself as Donna Anna, Scotti as the Don, Farrar as Zerlina, and Gadecki as Donna Elvira). He was a remarkable actor. In the films, long before sound, he proved his acting abilities (I recall his playing in a silent Marion Davies' film—*The Cardboard Lover*). His records (not as many as one would have wished) have always appealed to me for their restraint and aristocratic style. There was a strong affinity between his and Scotti's vocal style. Both had that rather austere, "dry" nobility that makes them seem on first hearing less endowed than the more plangent singers such as Ruffo and Mardones, but with further acquaintance proves to be a special fascination. He made most of his records in Europe—in Barcelona around 1902 and in Milan afterwards. Only a few of these found their way in the early black-label discs of Victor. Why he was not accorded Red Seal rating remains a mystery. His only Red Seal discs (and consequently the only record matrices likely to be preserved) were two Spanish duets with Bori and *the Ballo in Maschera* ensembles with Caruso. He was a celebrity artist on Columbia, but made only two double-sided discs for this company. It is interesting to compare his *Vecchia zimarra* with Caruso's record, as De Seguerola was the singer Caruso represented on that occasion.

Herman Jadlowker

ANOTHER Metropolitan singer of the same period, who died in 1953, was the Polish tenor **Hermann Jadlowker**. He was born in Riga in 1879, where at 15 he ran away from home to escape the distasteful drudgery of a commercial career. Though he sang at the Metropolitan for two seasons (he was heard in a variety of operas, creating the tenor roles in *Donne Curiose* and *Koenigskinder*) he was far more popular in Berlin where he was the favorite singer of Kaiser Wilhelm II. Strangely, he had been singing for almost ten years in Karlsruhe before Berlin discovered him. And, all these years he was busy making Odeon records, singing as a guest at Cologne and elsewhere. Even his Metropolitan appearances were made while on leave from the provincial Karlsruhe. Only when he appeared at the Metropolitan did Berlin sit up and take notice, though it is said that the direction there had scruples in engaging him, as he was Jewish. At this point, the Kaiser, who had heard him at Karlsruhe, barged in and simply ordered his engagement, attending his debut and applauding vehemently. Jadlowker remained Berlin's top tenor for about 10 years, but his voice began to coarsen and darken after 1920, perhaps because he elected to sing every type of role from Almagiva to Otello, from Parsifal to Don Jose. Essentially, he was a lyric tenor though with a dark timbre. One can be a dramatic tenor with very high trumpet-like tones, like Tamagno, and one can have a dark, warm quality (Jadlowker's actually was a trifle husky) and still be a lyric voice. Jadlowker sounded much like a high baritone. He pushed his voice too much in the heroic repertoire, with disastrous results. His last recordings were some Polydor electrics of 1927, and he definitely sound

like a baritone. Yet he was still singing as a cantor in the synagogues of Berlin, and after 1933 first at Riga and then in Jerusalem up until a year or so ago. He died in Jerusalem.

Jadlowker's early synagogue training gave his voice an unusual agility, hence his most amazing record is the *Serenade from Il Barbiere* (luckily now available in the HMV Archive series). It is sung exactly as Rossini wrote it, with perhaps one or two trills and added fioritura added. Only when one has heard this amazing tenor-coloratura does one realize that even the best light tenor, such as Schipa, does not give more than the bare bones of Rossini's music. Jadlowker's recorded heritage is an enormous one with hardly one of his many roles omitted. Before his Berlin engagement, he sang for Odeon later for Victor and HMV (his first celebrity discs were made in America). How famous he became in Germany is revealed by the fact that he is one of a very few singers whose records HMV issued single-sided with red labels.

Heinrich Knoté

A GREAT German tenor, who deserves more attention from collectors than he has had, was **Heinrich Knoté**, who died in Bavaria at the age of 83. He made electric Odeons when he was sixty (issued in America by Decca around 1940), and they were better than anything he had previously recorded. His career was a strange one. He started as an actor, then became a musical comedy singer, after which his fine voice procured for him an engagement at the Munich Opera as a buffo, where his David was especially admired. The old Wagnerian veteran, Heinrich Vogl, discovered him at Munich. When Vogl died in 1900, Knoté was ready to step into Vogl's shoes, singing Siegfried during the Munich Festival. He was at the Metropolitan from 1904 to 1908, singing in the revival of Goldmark's *Koenigen von Saba* as well as Manrico in an Italian *Il Trovatore*. He returned to America in 1922 with Hurok's first German Opera Company (among whose famous stars were Schorr, Kipnis, Seinemeyer, Urlus, Fleischer, and others). Knoté surprised everybody by singing better than he had 15 years previously, giving one of the most artistic performances of Tristan that many had heard. In 1930, he was singing even better since he had discovered the rules of *bel canto*. In former years, he had been under the influence of the old barking Wagnerian style. His recordings reveal his singing development. His oldest G & T's are rather stilted and stiff, characteristically German. His later Ankers (very rare) of 1914 are somewhat better, but his electric Odeons of 1930 are truly remarkable and among the finest Wagnerian recordings that one can hear.

Audrey Mildmay—the lady of the Manor, so to speak, of Glyndebourne, who died this past year—was chiefly of importance as the force which created the festivals of Glyndebourne. It was for her that the lovely theatre at Glyndebourne was built. Those festivals assuredly have earned the gratitude of every Mozart operatic enthusiast for their bewitching pre-war productions. Miss

Mildmay appeared in two of those, as Susanna and as Zerlina. A little small of voice and rather pale of interpretation, she was always tasteful, elegant and refined. Her Susanna was better than her Zerlina, but she was gracious and charming in both roles. She too was an early victim of the malady to which Cebotari, Spletter and Ferrier succumbed.

Reinold Werrenrath (1883-1953) was a singer more important to America than to Europe. He was the son of George Werrenrath, a Danish opera tenor who made his home in America. Reinold was born in Brooklyn, N. Y. and first attracted attention as a singer while attending New York University. He made his debut at the Worcester (Mass.) Festival in 1907. He sang for three seasons (1918-1921) at the Metropolitan, making his debut as Silvio in *Pagliacci*. He concertized and sang widely in oratorio, and also sang for the radio. Around 1940, he retired to teach. He originally sang on back-label Victor records, making some worthwhile lieder and arias. It is rather ironic that he was awarded Red Seal distinction when his voice changed in quality. Most of his Red Seals were ballads and popular songs, though he made some operatic arias. The older black labels serve best as true mementoes of a fine musician and singer.

Eduard Lichtenstein, the first singer to depart in 1953, was a German operetta tenor, who began his career as a buffo. Born in 1889, he had an exceptionally early debut in Hamburg in 1908. There he sang with the youthful Elisabeth Schumann and Lotte Lehmann (the latter mentions him in her book). His David, which he sang when only 23, was so much admired that he even sang the role with Van Rooy at Covent Garden. After a period at Wiesbaden, he scored such a success in an operetta by Kuenecke (*Vetter aus Dingsda*, known in America as *Cousin from Nowhere*) that he devoted the rest of his career to musical comedy. For many years, he was Tauber's understudy in Berlin, taking over the latter's new Lehar roles when he went to Vienna.

In 1933, Lichtenstein had to leave Berlin. He settled in Amsterdam, where he seldom sang but became a leading vocal teacher. After the war, he found that the long rest had improved his voice, so—despite his age—he resumed his long interrupted career, singing with great success in Switzerland and Germany (particularly in his beloved Hamburg where he sang 40 performances of *Paganini* at the age of 62). In December 1952, he left Holland for another engagement at Hamburg, from which he was not to return. On January 8, he appeared there in a special concert, commemorating the fifth anniversary of his great friend Richard Tauber, singing all the songs they had studied and sung together. Two hours later he died. He made many recordings, including operatic ones in his Hamburg days for both Odeon and green-label HMV (by co-incidence, he sang several duets with Kaete Herwig). He also made some Edison Amberola cylinders. Of his later period, some electric Artiphones exist, but I have never encountered these.

FINALLY, mention should be made of one great singer who died without leaving us any echoes of her voice—**Mariette Mazarin**, who still remains the unforgotten Elektra of the American premiere at the Hammerstein Opera House. She may possibly have recorded during the first primitive period of the phonograph, as she sang under various names. When she first left the Paris *Conservatoire* to make her debut at the *Opera*, she was known as Mile. Charles. Shortly after this, she married the bass, Leon Rothier (a marriage which did not last long) and changed her name to Mme. Charles-Rothier. Where or when she became Marietta Mazarin remains a mystery. Maybe the name was devised for her American career, though under that name she also had a glorious career in Brussels, particularly through the revival of *Les Troyens*. Some years ago, I discovered that she was living in extreme poverty in a small village near Lyons, and launched an appeal for her. As a result of this, she made a record. Despite almost complete blindness and neglected health (during the war she did not even possess a pair of shoes), her voice was in fine condition. She even gave a concert at this time. Like Labia's record, Mazarin's was entrusted to the care of someone who never delivered it to me. Surely this record must exist somewhere. I never heard it and do not even know what selection she recorded. It would seem the posthumous fame of this singer now rests on one man's honesty.

Collectors' Issues

VICTOR continues its re-issues of great vocal stars of former days both on LP and on 45 rpm "extended play." The latter series offer some excellent buys and, in quality, they are somewhat better than LP. Actual comparisons with old 78-rpm records of the same selections proves in most cases the superiority of 45 rpm which, with its smoother and more silent surface, has an edge over shellac pressings. Caruso is well represented on 45 "extended play" in *Five Verdi Arias* (ERAT-4), *Four Puccini Arias* (ERAT-5) and also in four French arias (ERAT-7). One disc (ERAT-6) is entitled *The Four Caruso Best Sellers*. It contains the *Pagliacci* aria, "Celeste Aida," "M'appari" from *Mitha*, and Handel's *Largo*. It would be interesting to know the amount of royalty the tenor earned on these selections in his time, and how much his heirs have gotten. *Caruso in Duets* (ERAT-9) links the great tenor with Alma Gluck, Antonio Scotti, Geraldine Farrar and Schumann-Heink. Gigli, McCormack and Schipa, other noted Victor tenors, are also represented on "extended play." And for tenor competition there is ERAT-26 with different arias by Caruso, Gigli, McCormack and Schipa and ERA-181 with Caruso, Gigli, Peerce and Tagliavini all singing the same aria—"Recondita armonia" from *Tosca*. As to whom the honors go remains a personal viewpoint, but Peerce sounds strangely

like Caruso, and Gigli is a more personable Cavardossi than Tagliavini.

Some strange programs show up on LP in the collectors' re-issues which, as most know in Victor's case, can be identified by the letters that preface the numbers—LCT. *Caruso in Neapolitan Songs* (LCT-1129) turns out to be something entirely different from its title. Out of 14 selections, only four can be honestly called Neapolitan Songs. Here was a chance for a rare collection of Caruso's favorite songs from his home town, which he sang with much fervor and spirit. As a program, this LP has much to offer with two Tchaikovsky songs which are among the tenor's best recordings. *Ten Unforgotten Stars* (LCT-1138) has 13 selections (arias and duets) by Bori, Caruso, De Luca, Galli-Curci, Gigli, McCormack, Ponselle, Schipa, Tibbett and Thomas. Some duplications from earlier LP issues and both acoustic and electrical recordings are present, with the latter prevailing. Dates of the original recordings are given.

The first LP release from Victor (LCT-1133) honoring the late Elisabeth Schumann, presents a program of lieder which the soprano made in her last years for the phonograph while in England. The selections are Schumann's *Frauenliebe und Leben*; Schubert's *Die Forelle*; *Du bist die Ruh*; *Horch, Horch, die Lerch*; *Heidenroslein*; *Das Lied im gruenen*; the "Romanze" from *Rosamunde*; and *Ave Maria*. While a most welcome memento of a gracious lieder artist, there are evidences in these songs that some of the bloom of the soprano's voice was gone though her artistry prevails. Let us hope that Victor will re-issue LP discs of her famous *Schubert Recital* (set M-497) and the *Leider Recital* (set M-383) which were issued in the 1930s. They offered some of the loveliest lieder singing on records in their time; and would assuredly be most cherishable souvenirs of Mme. Schumann.

Maggie Teyte is honored with an LP release (LCT-1133) containing her famous recordings of 14 Debussy songs, with Alfred Cortot at the piano, and her exquisite interpretations of Faure's *Après un reve*, Paladilhe's *Psyche*, Duparc's *Chanson triste*, and three Hahn songs. Gerald Moore is the knowing accompanist in the latter. Since Teyte has been allowed to break the LP ice, I'd like to put a bid in for an LP re-issue of her one-and-only Victor album *French Operatic Arias* (MO-1169) which has been such a delight that my records are getting worn.

Speaking of mating tenors cheek to jowl, as it were, Eterna has come up with a heterogeneous LP disc (No. 703) called *Excerpts from Verdi Operas by Great Tenors of the Past* with ten arias sung by seven leading tenors—Zenatello, Rayner, Pertile, Piccaver, Lauri-Volpi (he's still singing and would probably dislike the reference to the past), Vignas, and Lois. Rayner and Pertile are represented in selections from *Otello* in which they acquit themselves credibly but not outstandingly. Piccaver, in the "Ingenisco" from the *Requiem*, Francisco Vignas in "Ma se m'e forza" from *Ballo in Maschera*, and Vittorio Lois in "Di quella pira" from

Trovalgre emerge as winning personalities from these old acoustic recordings. If Lois' singing in the opera house was consistently as fine as his "Di quella pira," he must have been an excellent Manrico in his time. The quality of the reproduction varies in this disc and the presence of 78-rpm surfaces prevails. The notes on the envelope are lacking in informative material on the artists. Why not give the dates of each recording; or would this perhaps reveal sources which might prove embarrassing to the sponsors of the disc?

Eterna comes up with more dubbings of operatic selections by Leo Slezak, this time from *Lohengrin*, *Tannhauser* and *Meistersinger* (disc 499), and also dubbings of ten lieder by the tenor (disc 493). The songs are by Schubert, Schumann, Wolf and Strauss. In the past, I have not been impressed with dubbings of Slezak's operatic recordings. A fine artist in the opera house, on records his voice too often sounds strained and unduly pushed, with limited tonal coloration. Most of the previously issued operatic selections were pitched too high, which may have given this listener a wrong impression of the noted tenor. This new disc, in which care has been taken to preserve pitch, offers the best dubbings of Slezak's operatic singing I have heard to date. However, for intimate and often caressing artistry—surprising from a true *helden tenor*—Slezak's singing of ten lieder reveals his status as an artistic interpreter of lieder in a surprising manner. How many dramatic tenors have been able to sing with such poise and tonal delicacy in songs like Schubert's *Nacht und Traum*, Schumann's *Der Nussbaum* and *Mondnacht*, and Wolf's *Verschwiegene Liebe*. Most of these songs were derived from electrical recordings which the tenor made in the late 1920s for Polydor.

Yet another famous tenor of the past is represented in a new LP recording. Following its successfully engineered two-disc release of dubbings of Emmy Destinn's recordings of the acoustic era, Classic Editions has brought out a two-disc set of 29 recordings made by Fernando De Lucia (set 7002). One of the controversial figures in the annals of operatic singing, De Lucia's lyrical singing stemmed from the *bel canto* school—his pure legato style and his coloratura abilities were exceptional accomplishments. His often excessive vibrato has blinded many to his fine artistry. In his early career, De Lucia is said to have employed a more dramatic way of singing by excessive breath pressure, which caused vibration to develop in his voice. He was the original Canio in *Pagliacci*, singing the role in the 1890s at the Metropolitan. In the collection of operatic arias on these discs, he can be heard in Canio's music which he seems less suited to than others. Many of the recordings from which these dubbings were derived were not well reproduced, hence the quality and level of the sound in this set varies. However, Classic's engineer has managed to overcome some of the faults of old records, thus preserving the artistry which is the important thing. For style, De Lucia could teach much to many a young tenor of today, though his liberties with tempi and in phrasing would not be condoned these days.

—J.N.

TWO OPERAS



HUMPERDINCK: *Haensel und Gretel* (complete); Josef Metternich (Father), Maria von Ilosvay (Mother), Elisabeth Gruemmer (Haensel), Elisabeth Schwartzkopf (Gretel), Anny Felbermayer (Sandman and Dew Fairy), Else Schuerhoff (Witch), Choir of Loughton High School for Girls and Bancroft's School and the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel LP set 3506-B, 2 discs, \$11.90.

●EVERYBODY in this extraordinarily fine performance of Humperdinck's delightful fairy opera conveys their affection for it. The feeling that grownups are trying to be children is not suggested, for Gruemmer and Schwartzkopf avoid the archness that others so often overdo. And, the true adults enter into the picture in exactly the right manner. How sweetly Felbermayer sings her two roles, which are carefully contrasted by different stage positions. To perform this opera in the knowing manner to win all hearts, who have not lost contact with childhood, each and every one associated with the performance should suggest sympathy and understanding of a child's world. Amazingly enough, this is exactly what all do here, even to von Karajan who conducts with warmth and sensitivity. Schuerhoff's Witch is properly wicked, more sinister than most but this makes for true contrast. In recorded opera, singers who can act with their voices are blessed indeed, and that is exactly what these singers do. Perhaps those who acquired Urania's set of this opera will not wish to buy another. After all, that cast headed by Erna Berger, Marie Luise Schilp and Hans Hermann Nissen was very good, though the orchestral direction of Arthur Rother was not in the class of von Karajan. Nor was the recording quite up to the standards here. The string tone in this new set is especially lovely. As for the Columbia set in English, it has its place but I think that performance is less convincing with some of its artistic cuteness and archness. The German words fit the music best, and when one has a complete libretto in English and German one is well served. Perhaps for children, the English version is preferable, but for we grownups who like once in a while to become children again (as indeed many of us are at heart) this should not be the case. —P.H.R.

●**MASSENET:** *Werther* (Opera in 3 Acts); Pia Tassinari (Charlotte), Vittoria Neviani (Sophie), Ferruccio Tagliavini (Werther), Marcello Cortis (Albert), Giuliano Ferrein (The Bailiff), and others, Orchestra and Chorus of the Radio Italiana, Turin, under the direction of Francesco Molinari Prandelli. Cetra LP set C-1245, 3 discs, \$17.85.

●THIS issue of Massenet's *Werther*, starring Ferruccio Tagliavini and Pia Tassinari in roles

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for which they are famous in Italy, challenges Urania's set (reviewed in these columns last November). Though Cetra has employed an Italian cast, its members sing in French. This fact places them all at a considerable disadvantage with Mme. Juyol, M. Richard and the Urania singers, who accorded Massenet's opera a performance of impeccable style and diction.

Tassinari comes off best as an approximation to an authentic style, while her husband, Tagliavini, though spinning many beautiful soft phrases, is guilty of frequent errors in French diction, and of an Italian bravura attitude that seems out of place in this music. Tassinari brings warmth to an authentic style, while her husband, Tagliavini, though spinning many beautiful soft phrases, is guilty of frequent errors in French diction, and of an Italian bravura attitude that seems out of place in this music. Tassinari brings warmth to an authentic style, while her husband, Tagliavini, though spinning many beautiful soft phrases, is guilty of frequent errors in French diction, and of an Italian bravura attitude that seems out of place in this music.

Tagliavini's singing is made up of its familiar patchwork of melting pianissimi and forced climaxes. The other singers are indeed acceptable, and the orchestra and recorded sound come off very well. Prandelli hasn't quite the finesse of Sebastian, but he obviously feels the sentiment in this music.

With the appearance of these two sets, quite a bit has appeared in print, lately, in a tone very derogatory to Massenet's opera. This is nothing but the most arrant snobbery and provincialism on the part of those who have evidently decided, as a foregone conclusion, that Massenet is a composer hardly worth noticing. The fact that *Werther* is still very popular, after 62 years of existence, in Paris, where the public has excellent taste and is known to be fastidious, must have some significance.

If you want to own a performance of *Werther* that is truly and properly French, you better turn your attention to Urania's fine set; if you are a Tagliavini-Tassinari fan you will find much to enjoy in Cetra's latest venture. —M. de S.

AMERICAN A

COWELL: *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano*; **SHAPERO:** *Sonata for Piano Four Hands*; respectively Joseph Szigeti (violin) and Carlo Bussotti (piano) and Harold Shapero and Leo Smit (piano). ML-4841.

HARRIS: *Sonata for Violin and Piano*; **PALMER:** *Quartet for Piano and Strings*; respectively Josef Gingold (violin) and Johana Harris (piano) and John Kirkpatrick (piano) with members of the Walden Quartet of the University of Illinois. ML-4842.

KIRCHNER: *String Quartet No. 1*; **FINE:** *String Quartet (1952)*; respectively the American Art Quartet and the Juilliard String Quartet. ML-4843.

April, 1954

MENNIN: *Quartet No. 2*; **IMBRIE:** *Quartet in B Flat*; the Juilliard String Quartet. ML-4844.

BOWLES: *Music for a Farce*; *Scenes d'Anabase*; **DELLO JOIO:** *Variations and Capriccio for Violin and Piano*; respectively David Glazer (clarinet), Herbert C. Mueller (trumpet), Elden C. Bailey (percussion), and William Masselos (piano), William Hess (tenor) accompanied by Josef Marx (oboe) and Masselos, and Patricia Travers (violin) and the composer at the piano. ML-4845.

BERGER: *Woodwind Quartet in C* and *Duo for Cello and Piano*; **HILL:** *Sextet for Piano and Winds, Op. 39*; respectively the Fairfield Wind Ensemble, Bernard Greenhouse (cello), and Anthony Makas (piano), and Lilian Kallir (piano) with the New York Woodwind Quintet. ML-4846. (all Columbia LPs available singly at \$5.95 each.)

●THIS is Year II of Columbia's altruistic and hence automatically praiseworthy "Five Year Plan" to give a certain currency to the work of our own composers. Herewith the second annual batch of six discs in the continuing "Modern American Music Series."

Of the fourteen pieces assembled here, two or three are immediately ingratiating (the Keystone cop frolic of Bowles and its coupling up Dello Joio, which tends to wander but takes its auditors along, and Cowell's *Sonata*, which is full of fine old hymn tunes). A similar number give evidence of ensconcing themselves firmly on straight musical merit (Kirchner's splendidly wrought and neo-Bartokian *Quartet No. 1* and the two contrasting examples of Berger's expertness, the one an engaging caper and the other a granitic study in constant dialogue). At least two of the set are unabashedly eclectic but no less winning for their deflection (Shapero's *Four-Hand Sonata*, which owes a debt to Leonard Bernstein and Alexei Haieff among others, and E. B. Hill's *Sextet*, which evokes nothing if not the ever so polite asstringency of Faure and his coterie). The quartets by Fine, Imbrie and Mennin are intellectual products, and absolutely unprepossessing on short acquaintance in spite of their structural excellences. Palmer's is easier on the ears, perhaps even too facile for its own good. The Harris is rather turgid, and what he does to a simple folk tune (*I'll Be True to My Love*) shouldn't happen to an ugly theme, let alone a promising one. The Bowles *Scenes d'Anabase* was written when he was twenty-two. He is now twice that age and time has cured him of his early waywardness, as witness the *Music for a Farce*. I cannot understand why, in the circumstances, we were made to suffer the hideousness of his youthful transgressions. The *Scenes d'Anabase* may be an authentic redolence of Berber culture, but I am inclined to doubt it.

So much, then, and perhaps not enough, about this impressive sampling of mostly contemporary Americana. Quite aside from the debits and

credits assigned in the foregoing, Columbia is due a vote of gratitude for its enterprise in going at the problem of the modern chamber repertory more or less systematically. One looks in vain for any real masterpieces in this array, but that does not invalidate their having been made available for the possible delectation of the general public. As a documentary on the musical scene this annual series will one day form an invaluable adjunct to musicology. Whether or not the notion of form-over-content will then prevail, as it does here, is yet to be seen. Certainly the recording scene will have made some substantial progress. By today's standards, however, one could not ask for better reproduction than Columbia has provided for these half-dozen discs.

—James Lyons

RECORD ROUNDUP



EPIC recordings offer a problem in balancing unlike any other LP of today. Apparently they employ a different curve than any domestic LP. Soundwise, they are excellent on the high end, deficient in the middle, and over-loaded on the bass end. For best results, we have found a 300 bass turnover and an AFS top, though it doesn't solve the problem of the deficiency in the middle range.

Among recent Epic releases, **Cor de Groot's** performances of the 24 *Preludes of Chopin* (LC-3017) offers some sensitive playing with no mauling of the music's sentiment. He is best in the quiet pieces; there is insufficient power in the more outspoken ones. The recording makes it difficult to report on this disc. At its price, it cannot compete with the Gulda record which offers better performances and better piano reproduction. **Cor de Groot and Willem Van Otterloo** conducting the **Hague Phil. Orch.** give us glistening recordings of **Morton Gould's** *Interplay for Piano and Orchestra and Spirituals for Orchestra* (LC-3021). The recording here, balanced as recommended above, is stunning, but in the latter work for overall clarity the Dorati version (Mercury 50016) is best.

Jean Fournet and **L'Orch. des Concerts Lamoureux** perform **Bizet's** *L'Arlesienne Suites Nos. 1 and 2* (Epic LC-3018) and a group of **Chabrier** works including the *Espana Rhapsodie* and the *Suite Pastorale* (Epic LC-3028). The performances in both cases are excellent but the thinness of the middle sections of the orchestra in the Chabrier especially is annoying. One suspects if one could balance Epic's curve that these performances would prove the best to date on LP since the conductor has the fervor and verve for the music. In the Bizet music, he doesn't match Stokowski.

Alexander Uninsky playing Liszt's *Sonata in B minor and Sonetto del Petrarca No. 104* (Epic LC-3027) doesn't compete with Edith Farnardi (Westminster 5266) in the former. His employment of modern technical bravura allows for

little legato or personal romanticism, with the result that the work is poorly balanced.

Paul van Kempen, whom we have admired as an operatic conductor, with the Berlin Phil. Orch. plays **Beethoven's Seventh Symphony** (Epic LC-3026), and **Eugen Jochum**, conducting the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam, plays **Strauss' Don Juan** and **Till Eulenspiegel** with a performance of **Liszt's Les Preludes** by **Willem van Otterloo** and the Hague Phil. Orch. thrown in (Epic LC-3032). The recording here offers quite a problem with some of the most aggressive string tone we have ever heard. The best of these performances are Jochum's. Indeed, if recording could be controlled properly, these would rate among the best of Strauss tone poems on LPs, though followed up by the Liszt work which is not as well performed this orchestral program builds to a letdown. Van Kempen's Beethoven is too stolid in the outer movements as his tempi are too slow.

Shura Cherkassky and the **Berlin Phil. Orch.** conducted by **Leopold Ludwig** (Decca DL-9605) is heard in **Tchailowsky's** ubiquitous *Concerto in B flat minor*. There is all-around musical competence, poise and assurance in the performance, but the opening movement is taken at too slow a pace. Recording is realistic but the upper strings in loud passages are often beset with a buzzing that suggests a beehive in close proximity.

Urania has issued a bunch of German tapes in its Request series with generally all-around good reproduction. Most of the performances are strictly in the German Kapellmeister tradition—competent, stolid and unexciting. The veteran **Hermann Abendroth** proves his musical capabilities in sound performances of **Tchailowsky's Symphony No. 4** (RS-7-25) and **Symphony No. 6** (RS-7-12) and **Beethoven's Symphony No. 4** (RS-7-17). The latter is coupled with **Beethoven's Symphony No. 1** performed by Arthur Rother and the Berlin Philharmonic. **Abendroth** also conducts the Orchestra Radio Leipzig in a performance of **Brahms Violin Concerto** poorly played by **Gerhard Manke**. (RS-7-4). Unpersuasive are performances of **Debussy's La Mer** by **Ernest Borsamaky** and **Sym. Orch. of Radio Leipzig** and **Iberia** by **Johannes Schueler** and **Prussian State Orch.** (RS-7-26). **Favorite Strauss Waltzes and Overtures** (RS-7-21) is best served by **Karl Boehm's** and **Abendroth's** performances.

Clarence Watters, playing on the fine organ of Trinity College, Hartford, Conn., gives a clean and sensitive performance of **Dupre's Symphonic Passion** (Classic LP CE-1020). This, an extended work in four sections, is the fruit of improvisation. Its sections, *Le Monde dans l'attente du Sauveur*, *Nativite*, *Crucifixion* and *Resurrection*—are well contrasted and full of delicious sounds. The harmonies are faintly modern with occasional Franckian chromaticism. There is plenty of rhythmic variety. Other organ performances by Mr. Watters, well worth acquiring, are **Franck's Trois Chorals and Priere** (Classic 1007) and **French Baroque Organ Music** (Classic 1008).

(Continued on page 274)

The American Record Guide

MORE OPERA

BLOW: *Venus and Adonis*; Margaret Ritchie (Venus), Gordon Clinton (Adonis), Margaret Field-Hyde (Cupid), Michael Cynfelin (Huntsman), others, L'Oiseau-Lyre Orchestral Ensemble, R. Veyron-Lacroix (harpsichord), Anthony Lewis (conductor). L'Oiseau-Lyre LP OL-50004, \$5.95.

▲IN a foreword to the score, which L'Oiseau-Lyre publishes, it is said that the work of John Blow (1649-1708) "has been unjustifiably neglected, in part because the contemporary scene was dominated by his pupil Henry Purcell." Listening to this little opera (originally called a *Masque* but which, as Anthony Lewis has said, "shows all the characteristics of opera"), one realizes how much Purcell obtained from his teacher. This work, written seven years before Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, shows from whence Purcell derived some of his style. The lamentative final scene, in which Adonis dies, anticipates the last scene in *Dido and Aeneas*. Blow's rhythmic subtlety is a delight and his harmonic style lends much variety in expression. Mr. Lewis tells us that the libretto had much to do with satire on court life and manners; also that "the immediate purpose of the opera was presumably to display the talents of one of Charles II's mistresses, Mrs. Mary (Moll) Davis, and her daughter, Lady Mary Tudor." Mrs. Davis took the part of Venus in the original performance, and her daughter—aged nine—was Cupid. The libretto abounds in some deliciously wily lines. Anyone who has enjoyed *Dido and Aeneas* should not fail to hear this early English *masque-opera*, which is very well presented with some fine English singers. Margaret Ritchie and Margaret Field-Hyde are excellent in their roles; Gordon Clinton as Adonis sings well but lacks essential ardor. Three boy sopranos, cast as Little Cupids, are delightful in the amusing Spelling Lesson. Only the

Huntsman, Michael Cynfelin, seems miscast, since the role lies a bit high for him.

This recording was issued previously in this country but the engineering was not good. London's engineers have done a notable job in re-engineering, getting rid of the former wiry sound of the strings. The listener should be warned that the level of sound is higher on the second side of the disc.

—P.H.R.

GIORDANO: *Andrea Chenier* (complete); Beniamino Gigli (Chenier), Gino Bechi (Gérard), Maria Caniglia (Maddalena), Giulietta Simionato (Countess), Maria Huder (Bersi), Leone Paci (Mathieu), Giuseppe Taddei (Fouquier-Tinville and Fléville), Italo Tajo (Roucher), others, La Scala Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Oliviero de Fabritiis. RCA Victor LP set LCT-6014 (2 discs), \$11.44.

▲WHILE the recording here, derived from 78 rpm discs made in the middle 1940s, is not as satisfactory as in the recent Cetra set, it still remains a remarkable achievement in its degree of realism sustained in the transfer. Unfortunately, the sound deteriorates at times suggesting the ends of the original records, but considered on the whole—even with its reduction to two discs—it remains quite satisfactory in its superior vocal artistry. Only the Maddalena of Tebaldi in the Cetra set is superior, though it should be noted that Caniglia is at her best in this performance. Andrea Chenier was always one of Gigli's finest roles and he makes the most of it vocally here as he did always in the opera house. While he indulges in some excesses, allowable perhaps in an opera which relies mainly on theatrical effectiveness, his singing is appropriately ardent and often carelessly expressive. Bechi is a richly sonorous Gérard, a far cry from his recent hard-pressed and gauche Figaro. This performance has several singers in its cast who were destined to become justly famous in the post-war years—Simionato, Taddei and Tajo. Though Taddei's contribution does not forecast

under the circumstances (since Bechi had not yet lost his rich sonority) that he would in another half dozen years steal the honors phonographically from Bechi in the role of Figaro, he proves his competence in his assignments as do Simionato and Tajo. But it is Gigli who steals the show and whose singing will claim the interest and affection of listeners for a long time to come.

—P.H.R.

LEHAR: *Das Land des Lachelns* (Operetta in 3 Acts); Elisabeth Schwartzkopf (Lisa), Erich Kunz (Gustl), Nicolai Gedda (Prince Sou-Chong), Mi (Emmy Loose), Tchang (Otakar Kraus); Fu-Li (Felix Kent); Servant (Andre Mattoni), the Philharmonia Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Otto Ackermann. Angel LP set 3507-B, 2 discs, \$11.90.

▲THE SAME brilliant cast and conductor, that made such a minor masterpiece of *The Merry Widow*, have followed with another Lehar operetta, *The Land of Smiles*, achieving similar entrancing results. First given in Vienna in 1929, this operetta owed its popularity to that vocal magician, Richard Tauber, who, as Prince Sou-Chong, took the operetta all over the civilized world, and made his principal song—*Thine Is my Heart Alone*—a universal favorite. Beside the potent reasons for world-wide fame, Lehar's score is a charming one—filled with quasi-Puccini melodies, a blend of Viennese sophistication and pseudo-Oriental touches and a more elaborate orchestration than its composer had achieved previously. The story of the affair between a Viennese Countess and a Chinese Prince of royal blood, with a transition from Vienna to Peking, is undoubtedly naive but not in the least hard to follow.

If you enjoyed *The Merry Widow*, you will, without doubt, enjoy the present operetta, for Ackermann and his forces again produce an atmosphere which is sheer magic. Schwartzkopf is a bewitching Lisa, singing with a refinement and musicality that no Lisa of the many stage

productions probably ever achieved. However, this generally impeccable artist must be charged with a few forced top tones on the final record-side. Gedda sings *Dein ist mein ganzes Herz* exceptionally well, even if he does not weave the ultimate spell that was Tauber's particular gift. Kunz and Loose are again present, the latter singing *Im Salon zur Blau'n Pagode* capably. The recording and presentation are up to Angel's lofty standard, which is a high one. —M. de S.

MOZART: *Bastien und Bastienne* (Opera buffa in 1 Act); Lise Hollweg (Bastienne), Waldemar Kmentt (Bastien), Walter Berry (Colas), Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Pritchard. Columbia LP ML-4835, \$5.95.

▲THIS delightful little *pastorale* would be worth hearing purely on its musical merits; as the work of a twelve-year-old boy it is something quite uncanny. The libretto, a translation from a French parody on Rousseau's *Le divin du village*, is nothing much in itself, but it serves as the string on which Mozart's youthful pearls are effectively hung. It is here given with the recitatives, not in the original score, but composed for a Salzburg performance.

The present performance is notable for its nicely poised and flowing style, its rhythms just sufficiently accented to give the melodies a proper lift. The three singers go through their roles with a fine note of seriousness to set off the warm light humor of Mozart's music. Their voices are unusually appealing, genuinely lyrical, neat and accurate. In a word, this is an exceptionally fine performance, with the voices perhaps just a mite over-recorded, but easily adjustable. The surfaces, however, are not altogether quiet.

Compared with the earlier recording (Period SPL 542) Columbia's is fuller and richer in sound. Though the singers in the older version were admirable, they do not quite compare with these, and the role of Bastien, a tenor, was given

The American Record Guide

to a contralto—the purpose being to convey the impression of youth. Mr. Kmenrt manages to sound quite young enough, and the contrast of the voices is certainly better this way. —P.L.M.

●
WAGNER: *Lohengrin* (complete); Wolfgang Windgassen (Lohengrin), Eleanor Steber (Elsa), Astrid Varnay (Ortrud), Hermann Uhde (Telramund), Josef Greindl (King Henry), Hans Braun (Herald), Chorus and Orchestra of the Bayreuth Festival 1953 conducted by Joseph Keilberth. London LP set LLA-16, 5 discs, \$29.70.

▲IN my estimation, London acquired the greatest Wagnerian operatic recording issued to date in its *Parsifal*, despite the fact that the excessive reverberation in the Bayreuth Festival Theatre often obscures detail in the orchestra. But Wagner's music can stand excessive reverberation. However, the place has much to do with the quality and character of a reproduced Wagnerian music drama. I suspect that recording engineers have a problem at Bayreuth which, on the evidence of this new issue, would seem to have been handled better in the *Parsifal* set. This recording of *Lohengrin* was accomplished from an actual performance at the Bayreuth Festival 1953, which results in poor balance and decidedly uneven reproduction with unbelievable noises thrown in from the audience and the scene shifters. At one point in Act 3, I thought someone had dropped something upstairs. At the end of Act 3, the applause of the audience reminded me that this was an actual performance and I went back to where I had heard strange sounds to discover they were actually in the recording.

Last month, I reviewed the Decca performance of *Lohengrin*, which I suspect was accomplished in a large studio since its over-all merits in recording are the antithesis of the faults in this new set. One accomplishment achieved in the Bayreuth performance, which is not realized in the Decca set, is the rich full sonorities of the orchestral climaxes. In the Decca

set, these were somewhat unduly monitored.

As an artistic achievement, I suspect that London's *Lohengrin* was far more successful in the opera house than it is from the record. The singers are better served in the Decca set as none of the voices get out of balance as they do on the stage at Bayreuth, and the choral singing does not smother any of the soloists as happens in the case of Greindl's King Henry.

Among the individual singers, Eleanor Steber stands out as a beacon light with the radiance and beauty of her voice. Of all the Elsas in the complete performances (and this includes the HMV set with Maude Cunitz, not yet released here), she is the only soprano who sounds truly transfigured. Her ingratiating tonal coloration and modulation are a delight to the ear. Windgassen is a fine Lohengrin with a smooth and expressive vocal style which is rare enough in German tenors, yet he lacks some of the ingratiating qualities of Fehenberg and unlike the latter suggests the strain of the role toward the end.

Astrid Varnay's Ortrud is effective in its implications of the evil qualities of the character but it is often beset with wobble. At her best, she is a more assured Ortrud than Helena Braun. After the superb Telramund of Ferdinand Franz, Herman Uhde's performance is a far less persuasive characterization vocally. Nor does Greindl's dry voiced King Henry efface memories of Otto von Rohr, though histrionically he is convincing. Hans Braun, as the Herald in both sets, sounds much better in the Decca performance. The orchestral direction of Joseph Keilberth is highly competent but lacking in the distinguishing qualities of Eugen Joachim. As to the choral singing, this is truly superlative—as indeed it should be—in the Bayreuth set. The choice between the London and the Decca releases will be a personal one, even in consideration of recording qualities, if not price since the latter is cheaper by a disc. Undoubtedly there are many listeners who prefer recordings of opera from a live

performance just as there are others who prefer a studio performance which offers better and more consistent balance.
—P.H.R.

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ROSSINI: *Il Signor Bruschino* (Comic Opera); Renato Capecchi (Gaudenzio), Elda Ribetti (Sofia), Carmelo Maugeri (Bruschino), Carlo Rossi (his son), Luigi Pontiggia (Florville), others, Milan Philharmonic Orchestra, Ennio Gerelli, conductor. Vox LP PL-8460, \$5.95.

CIMAROSA: *Il Maestro di Capella* (Comic Opera); Carmelo Maugeri (bass), Orchestra da Camera di Milano, Ennio Gerelli, conductor; *Il Matrimonio Segreto—Overture and Excerpts*; Elda Ribetti and Amilcare Blafford, same orchestra. Vox LP P-8450, \$5.95.

▲THE ITALIANS have always loved their comic operas. They have kept their second- and third-rate opera houses alive and proved an attraction in their main opera houses. Back in the season of 1932-33, the Metropolitan produced *Il Signor Bruschino* with De Luca and Pinza. Given as a curtain-raiser to Strauss' *Elektra*, it survived only four performances. De Luca felt it was an injustice to Rossini to mate that agreeable and often delightful comic opera to Strauss' modern work, as it was unlikely that an audience which favored one would favor the other. *Bruschino* was Rossini's eighth opera, written in his twenty-first year. The story is nonsense with a mixed-identity situation, but Pinza and De Luca, aided by Tokatyan and Fleischer made the most of it, which indeed the present cast does. They enter into the comic situations with the right spirit.

Now Ready
INDEX
Volume 19
(Sept. 1952—Aug. 1953)
The American Record Guide
Price 50c

Capecchi, Maugeri and Ribetti are fine singers, and their associates have agreeable voices.

Cimarosa seems to have anticipated some of the modern scores which exploit the instruments of the orchestra in his one-man affair, *Il Maestro di Capella* or *The Conductor*. The singer introduces himself as a conductor—the sole survivor of the old school (the school of Allesandro Scarlatti, which took itself most seriously, at whom Cimarosa is poking fun). He starts the orchestra which promptly begins with wrong entrances. Error after error are corrected by the singer-conductor until things are worked out to his satisfaction, resulting in his enthusiasm carrying him beyond the orchestra's playing. Maugeri handles his florid part with skill and the orchestra, which is supposed to be missing its cues, actually performs as intended. On the reverse face of the disc, selections from Cimarosa's most popular opera, *The Secret Marriage*, are heard. All of this has been excellently recorded so that the listener can simply sit back and be properly amused, since complete texts are provided.
—P.H.R.

•
SUPPE: *Boccaccio—Highlights*; Elisabeth Roon (Fiametta), Waldemar Kmett (Boccaccio), Kurt Preger (Lambertuccio), Gerda Scheyer (Beatrice), and others, Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera and Chorus of the Vienna Volksoper conducted by Anton Paulik. Columbia LP ML-4818, \$5.95.

▲A TIMELY subject, this: with Act I ending, like the Third Scene of Hindemith's *Mathis der Maler*, in a blaze of books. The resemblance probably stops there, however, for von Suppe's little operetta is conceived as pure frivolity, and its plot (by Richard Genée, co-author of the *Fledermaus* libretto) is almost pure Goldoni nonsense. Any resemblance to the author of the *Decameron* also seems pretty slight come to think of it.

This is music that belongs to Vienna: full of charm and gaiety, zestful, lilting, sometimes a little coarse. The frequent

(Continued on page 273)

The American Record Guide

Record Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

Orchestra

BEECHAM: *Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 8*; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham. Columbia LP disc ML-4828, \$5.95.

▲BEECHAM's reading of Beethoven's *Pastoral* is straight-forward and free from some of the eccentricities that have lately flawed his work. The orchestra plays well. The result is not, however, memorable for any kind of revelation. A feeling of serene lethargy accompanies Beecham's apparent lack of any kind of excitement over Beethoven's lovely and exalted recollections of a day in the country. Unlike Wordsworth whose heart *leaped up* when he "beheld a rainbow in the sky," Beecham's seems, alas, comforted but unstirred by experience of pastoral delights. Witness his sleepy pace for the second section, the paucity of vigor in his country dancers, and the lack of terror in his summer storm.

For those who feel strongly about this music, I must suggest the sensitive and revealing Toscanini performance which explores the wonders of Beethoven's countryside with such deep feeling.

—C.J.L.

BIZET: *Jeux d'enfants, Op. 22; Suite from La Jolie Fille de Perth*; **CHABRIER:** *Suite Pastorale*; L'Orchestre des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris conducted by Edouard Lindenberg. London LP LL-871, \$5.95.

▲AN ADEQUATE, up-to-date recording of the *Jeux d'enfants* and the *Suite Pastorale* which should satisfy the most fastidious admirers of these delightful scores. These are better performances than the recent MGM ones by Braithwaite, with the Parisian players performing with delicacy and ardor under Lindenberg. The recording is excellent. If the performance of the *Suite from La Jolie Fille de Perth* does not efface memories of Beecham's, one must concede that Lindenberg plays it very well. Bizet's *Jeux d'enfants* was originally written for two pianos but many prefer it in the orchestral version which is familiar to balletomanes.

—R.R.

•
BRAHMS: *Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 73*; Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP disc ML-4827, \$5.95.

▲IF there is another company accomplishing finer orchestral recording in America than Columbia these days, it has not come to my attention. Here is the most persuasive sounding performance of a Brahms symphony I have

yet heard. The Philadelphia plays with its accustomed precision, suavity, and luxuriousness. Ormandy, except for a fussy phrase here and there, keeps the music moving. His really notable achievement, however, is in neutralizing Brahms' opaque wind scoring. Delicate adjustments of balance are the secret, and no other conductor we regularly hear makes Brahms sound so transparent as Ormandy. He also manages most of the time to avoid ponderousness and bathos, too. That is no mean accomplishment either.

—C.J.L.

BRITTEN: *Four Sea Interludes* and *Passacaglia* from *Peter Grimes*, Op. 35a and b; *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*, Op. 34; Eduard van Beinum conducting the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam. London LP LL-917, \$5.95.

▲A FEW years back, Van Beinum recorded the *Sea Interludes* but also the impressive *Passacaglia*. The former are atmospheric, conjuring mood and scene—*Dawn, Sunday Morning, Moonlight, and Storm*. The latter binds the two scenes of the second act and conveys the passionate conflicts in Grimes' tortured soul. Though closely related to the story, the *Passacaglia* could have been successfully published as an independent composition for orchestra. As a suite, these works are as effective in the concert hall as in the theatre, for Britten handles his orchestra as skillfully as a master painter. *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* is quite a different opus but equally ingenious in another way. It consists of a series of variations, illustrating instrument by instrument and then in groups, and then all together in a final fugue. The tune is derived from Purcell's *Abdelazar*. It was originally written for a film called *Instruments of the Orchestra*, in which a narrator was included to announce each section (a role the writer has assumed on two occasions). I admit it is a bit of fun to have the amusing narration, but in continuous performance from a recording the role of the narrator could become irksome. The manner in which

258

Britten introduces the various instruments of the orchestra is so ingenious and so diverting and, at the same time, so musically satisfying that one would rather enjoy this wholly delightful work apart from spoken words. In both the music from *Peter Grimes* and *The Young Person's Guide*, Britten proves himself a master of the orchestra—in the former in a picturesque and movingly dramatic manner and in the latter in an entertainingly exuberant way. As an admirer of all these works, I welcome these new recordings. Both the performances and the playing of the orchestra are far ahead of any other existent ones, and the superb quality of London's realistic engineering is finer.

—P.H.R.

CHOPIN: *Les Sylphides—Ballet Music*; **IBERT:** *Divertissement for Chamber Orchestra*; L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris conducted by Roger Désormière. London LP LL-884, \$5.95.

▲THE ballet, devised from Chopin's piano music, was previously issued on a 10" LP in 1950, at which time I said that though I disliked Chopin orchestrated because such arrangements sounded false to the idiomatic character of the music, I was fascinated by the performance in which the conductor achieves delicacy and strength. Désormière always could obtain a luminosity of musical texture, as any who own his recordings know. Definitely one of the finest French conductors of our time, one rues the fact that he was stricken with an ailment a couple of years ago that has left him paralyzed at too earlier an age. The Ibert score was recorded at the same time as the Chopin by London but held up for a suitable coupling. Since it would seem that there is no likelihood of the conductor's making records in the near future, London has wisely re-issued the Chopin with the Ibert. The latter is one of Désormière's finest recordings, offering a performance the like of which I have never heard before, pointing up its satire with unmistakable relish. Ibert was obviously writing with his tongue in

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his cheek and, one can add, with his thumb to his nose, when he wrote this satire. It caricatures all accepted dance forms—the waltz, the gallop—as well as the wedding march and even the romantic nocturne. A work like this serves ideally for an antidote from the doldrums. If the music is not of any great consequence, it is truly diverting. —P.H.R.

•
DUKAS: *Symphony in C*; L'Orchestre de l'Association des Concerts Colonne conducted by George Sebastian. Urania LP 7102, \$5.95.

▲HERE is a French symphony which has been unjustly neglected. Both Dukas and Chausson were followers of Franck who, like their teacher, left us only one symphony each which is deserving of equal attention to their master's single opus. H. C. Colles, in the *Oxford History of Music*, has said that "Dukas' Symphony may be taken as the high-water mark in French symphonic music which had begun its rise with the fall of the Empire in the Franco-Prussian war." Thus, Dukas like his predecessors paved the way for later-day composers. Dukas' themes are not as striking as Franck's but his employment of them shows his musical ingenuity. Thus, to know and appreciate this work casual acquaintance—like in the case of the Franck *D minor*—will not reveal its worthy qualities to a listener. As Colles points out, Dukas allows each of its three movements to grow "spontaneously out of its own thematic material." Unlike Franck, Dukas does not employ the "cyclic" method. While romantic in character this work is classical in its formal construction. I would advise the listener to hear the lovely poetic slow movement first, for it will immediately arrest him. After that the long first movement will establish itself better in meaning though the somewhat prolix development section may require several hearings before its intentions are fully grasped. The performance and recording are effectively contrived. Sound wise there is plenty of realism, if not startlingly so.

260

Slightly less reverberation would have been helpful to greater clarity. Sebastian is a knowing musician rather than a brilliant one; he does not play up the ardent passages of this work in the manner of others—notably Toscanini, whose performance I well remember. But Sebastian's musical honesty and solicitude serve the composer advantageously, and he assuredly deserves a vote of thanks for reviving interest in this work. —P.H.R.

•
MOZART: *A Musical Joke*, K. 522; **MEHUL:** *Symphony No. 1 in G Minor*; respectively the Chamber Orchestra of Radio Berlin conducted by Matthieu Lange and the Symphony Orchestra of Radio Berlin conducted by Rolf Kleinert. Urania LP 7109, \$5.95.

▲PREVIOUS issues having been withdrawn, this recording of the K. 522 is the only one in the catalogues. It will do until a better one comes along, although that may not be too soon since we have had to wait all this time for the present issue. Let us be grateful, then, and pass lightly over the occasional lack of precision and the somewhat too reverberant sound. Actually, this work requires an ensemble of infinite skill if it to be heard as it was meant, because the delicious and deliberate discords miss their point if they are not perfectly turned out. The Berliners are not infinitely skillful but there you are. The Méhul is rather lovely and it is a wonder that this composer is not otherwise represented in the microgroove lists. Slightly younger than Mozart (1763-1817), Méhul was inevitably subject to his influence. But his own endowments were respectable and the *Symphony No. 1* amply attests this with its zestful outer movements and its affecting *Andante*. The French style is one that Mozart never embraced; Méhul's work sounds as if the young Mozart might have written it during a Paris sojourn. I do not mean to imply that it is a product of great genius, but it certainly endears itself promptly.

—J.L.

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MOZART: *Symphony No. 35 in D, K.385; Symphony No. 41 in C, K.551*; Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. Capitol LP disc P-8242, \$5.70.

▲THIS recording is not up to Capitol's late high standards. The first movement of the *Haffner* is muffled in sound, and elsewhere everything seems to lack spaciousness and air. The surfaces on my copy are noisy, too. It is a pity, for Steinberg's performances are quite good, except that the conductor chooses to play the *andante* of the *Jupiter* as if it were *adagio*. There is plentiful spirit and energy in the playing of the Pittsburgh Orchestra; a little more nuance would however, be helpful. Among modern recordings, I prefer van Beinum on the *Haffner*; and, in spite of some of his excesses in the slow movement, Beecham on the *Jupiter*. Both these versions moreover, sound more lifelike than the present issue. —C.J.L.

PIJPER: *Symphony No. 3*; **DIEPENBROCK:** *Marsyas—Prelude and Entr'acte*; the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam conducted by Eduard Van Beinum. London LP LL-851, \$5.95.

▲EVER since I heard Monteux conduct the Pijper in 1947 I have longed for a recorded performance of this unique by-product of a unique esthete—the composer had been a biologist of parts and he insisted on the efficacy of “germ-cells” in musical organisms. Quite aside from this neo-cyclical theory of his, Willem Pijper was one of the most arresting creative minds on the European scene during the first half of this century and it is only right that he should be represented, however belatedly, in the recorded repertory.

This *Symphony No. 3*, dating from 1926, is perhaps his finest work. It is masterfully constructed, or evolved if you prefer to take the “germ-cell” thing seriously, well spiced with dissonance but full to overflowing with a sort of blithe Ravelian wit and tenderness for April, 1954

all of its blaring ostinato and its programmatic invocation (*via* Virgil) of the powers of darkness. Truly a welcome addition to the catalogues. The Diepenbrock music is very pretty but not especially interesting. It sounds rather like César Franck would have sounded if he had been writing about tulip fields in Holland instead of organ lofts in Paris. The performances are first rate and the sound is likewise. —J.L.

●
ROSSINI-RESPIGHI: *La Boutique Fantasque*; the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Alceo Galliera. Angel 30001, \$4.95.

▲BY a slight margin the Ansermet performance of this delightful score is the superior one, in terms of execution, but it is pertinent to point out that the London disc is a 12-incher and hence a dollar more expensive than this newer

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version. While we are counting pennies, there is also a snappy performance by Kurtz that offers, on the reverse, an orchestral transcription of *Carnaval*. Both Ansermet and Kurtz read the music balletically, while Galliera plays it as if it were a concert piece. The latter approach is surely the more sensible for a recording, unless you are an unreconstructed balletomane, and I am therefore inclined to favor Galliera. The Angel sound is far and away the best of the three. —J.L.

•
STRAVINSKY: *Pulcinella* (Complete); Mary Simmons (soprano); Glenn Schnittke (tenor) and Philip MacGregor (bass) with the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Igor Stravinsky. Columbia LP ML-4830, \$5.95.

▲AT LAST we are vouchsafed a first complete recording of the wonderful *Pulcinella*, and without question it will be the authoritative one for years to come. The sound is as good as you could ask; the soloists are entirely adequate in their relatively slight assignments; Szell's orchestra delivers precisely what the score asks. As a conductor, at least when I have observed him in this role, Stravinsky is no great shakes. As usual in performances under his supervision, however, the musicians and the singers give him what they know he wants because they respect him, if not because he knows how to get what he wants by dint of sheer stick technique. His *Pulcinella*, a "ballet with song in one act after Pergolesi," dates from 1919-20. Its Paris premiere in the latter year, with scenery and costumes by Picasso and Ansermet conducting, really must have been something to witness. Myself, I have never seen the work mounted. Still, as with all of Stravinsky's writing for the stage, the purely musical experience is so nearly total that the requisite illusions of the theater are obviated. Massine's take-off tableaux on the Neapolitan disguise comedy is no balletic or dramatic masterpiece anyway. That is not to say that the familiar *Pulcinella Suite* does justice to the parent work. To the contrary,

and no matter that the interpolated songs are extraneous to the overall organic structure, there is an appropriateness to the musical whole beside which the abridged concert version seems but a pale shadow. The way in which Stravinsky expropriates the Pergolesian harmonies and never once violates their stylistic sanctity, despite an altogether new scheme of key relationships if you please, is one of the wonders of the modern repertory. —J.L.

•
TCHAIKOVSKY: *Nutcracker Suite*; **HANDEL-HARTY:** *Water Music*; Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel LP disc 35004, \$5.95 or \$4.95.

▲A STUNNING recording and performance of Tchaikovsky's magical and enduring *Nutcracker Suite* (the best one yet) is paired with a capricious and ineffective version of the Harty arrangement of Handel's noble and jolly *Water Music*. An incredibly slow pace in taken in the *Air*, everything is unbearably fussy in the *Hornpipe*, and there is a sustained horn note entering into the finale that is one for the books. The Harty version on Columbia is still the standard for this music, the Van Beinum on London is the best modern recording. As for the Tchaikovsky, it must be said that even the stylish Désormière performance would have to give ground to von Karajan's if that *Water Music* did not represent such a negating factor. —C.J.L.

•
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS: *The Wasps* (complete score); *Old King Cole—Ballet Suite*; the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Westminster LP WL-5228, \$5.95.

▲AS fine as Westminster recordings consistently have been, the word was that its new English performances would surpass anything that had gone before. The report was accurate, as our readers learned from the editor in a lead article two issues back. This subsequent release is every bit as fine as the first ones

The American Record Guide

were, and all of the generalities applied then are equally applicable here. On the face of it, of course, both of these Vaughan Williams works needed to be added to the catalogues, so that they are welcome purely on grounds of repertory. But so expert are the performances (supervised by the composer himself, incidentally) and so luminous is the reproductive sound (you must hear it to believe it) that Westminster's processes must be accounted the most successful in the field. Presumably the Aristophanes play that engendered *The Wasps* is familiar enough to preclude comment in this space. Vaughan Williams wrote his incidental music in 1909. The *Old King Cole* score, dating from 1923, is really a corker. Why has this ballet been passed over by our several American companies? On paper it looks like a natural-born choreographic hit.

—J.L.

Concerto

DEBUSSY: *Rhapsody for Orchestra and Saxophone*; **IBERT:** *Concertino da Camera for Saxophone and Orchestra*; Marcel Mulé (saxophone) and the Paris Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Manuel Rosenthal. Capitol LP L-8231, \$3.98.

▲BOTH of these works can be had in other couplings. The Debussy (not to be confused, incidentally, with his *Première rapsodie* for saxophone and piano) is coupled with the same composer's *Fantasy* for piano and orchestra on a Lyricord disc. The Ibert is available on a Philharmonia coupling with the Glazunov *Saxophone Concerto*. I have not heard the



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competitive performances, but the paucity of saxophone recordings in conspiracy with the minority enthusiasm of this instrument's devotees undoubtedly will lead the latter to acquire this latest release in any event. Musically, the value of the works is slight, but either of them is a legitimate novelty and quite worth an occasional hearing. It is a shame that the saxophone has not yet found its proper place in the standard symphonic ensemble because its coloristic capacities are unique. The reproduction here is excellent, and the soloist's breath control is grounds for wonderment, especially in the more idiomatic Ibert piece. —J.L.

●
KORNGOLD: *Violin Concerto in D;*

LALO: *Symphonie Espagnole;* Jascha Heifetz (violin) and, respectively, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Alfred Wallenstein and the RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra conducted by William Steinberg. RCA Victor LP LM-1782, \$5.72.

▲**HOLLYWOOD** long since lured Erich Wolfgang Korngold away from his wonted creative introspection. Too bad, for his gifts are sovereign. This *Violin Concerto* is a slickly suave memento of *alt Wien* but it does not altogether hide the authentic genius of its composer. It dates from 1946, when he indulged a sabbatical from the studios to get a few things off his chest. He should have stayed away longer; surely he could afford to after so many profitable years. Heifetz plays his assignment lovingly, and Wallenstein takes more pains than usual to provide a properly sympathetic ritornel. The Lalo has been better performed elsewhere, notably by Campoli, but there is no gainsaying the present soloist's executive brilliance or his greater capacities for superb *schmalts*. The lovely *Intermezzo*—the third movement—is unaccountably omitted. I say "unaccountably" because it looks to the naked eye as if there would have been enough room for it. The program notes supplied here are a disgrace for their dearth of musical information and their panegyrics to Heifetz. The sound is

264

Victor's usual concerto-type sound, which is to say that the soloist seems too close and the orchestra too distant. Except for this deliberate imbalance, however, the reproduction is excellent. —J.L.

●
LAMBERT: *Concerto for Piano and Nine Players;* **LORD BERNERS:** *Fragments Psychologiques, Le Poisson d'Or, and Three Little Funeral Marches;* Menahem Pressler (piano) and, in the Lambert, a chamber ensemble conducted by Theodore Bloomfield. MGM LP E-3081, \$4.85.

▲**ONLY** in the era of LP would we encounter such a mixed grille of unexpected delights. Constant Lambert is remembered as a brilliant conductor and arranger (*The Prospect Before Us*) and also as an author (*Music Ho*) of considerable gifts. But his own music has been *terra incognita* to us except for his witty *Horoscope* and, to a lesser extent, his *Rio Grande*. Now we are blessed with his utterly charming and audacious little *Concerto* for piano and nonet, handsomely performed by as virtuosic a group of instrumentalists as you are apt to find anywhere. Jazz is the tongue-in-cheek essence of the score but its mold is primarily classical, even to the "riff," as it would be called, that supplants the usual cadenza. And the Lord Berners pieces are just exquisite, every last one of them. We have known this unique figure only through his *Triumph of Neptune*. Now his true stature begins to emerge, and what do we find but an English counterpart of Erik Satie! Such titles as *A Laugh, A Sigh* and *For a Rich Aunt* disguise music that is really, like their Parisian prototypes, not only palpable but genuinely affecting—miniatures, to be sure, but ingenious in their self-contained succinctness. Pressler plays them with evident relish. —J.L.

●
MOZART: *Concerto No. 11 in F, K. 413; Concerto No. 22 in E flat, K. 482;* Vivia Rivkin (piano) with Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Dean Dixon. Westminster LP WL-5244, \$5.95.

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▲THIS disc introduces one of America's finest woman pianists and an American conductor of unusual musical attainments both of whom have been enjoying successes well deserved in Europe, in traditional roles. It also brings us the first recording of Mozart's *Concerto in F, K. 413* which has been unjustly neglected. The recording sound is superb with fine piano tone, but once again I must quibble over the excessive reverberation in the bass which does not serve Mozart's music ideally. Miss Rivkin plays both works superbly with fluidity and sensitivity. Dixon brings virility to his orchestral playing—not remiss in Mozart, but sometimes he lacks essential fluidity, permitting the music to bounce on occasion where it should glide. But the pianist holds her own and maintains vitality as well as fluency which leaves this listener satisfied with her presence. There is more maturity and stylistic consistency in her playing than in Dixon's, but he is nonetheless a proficient musician who is in complete command of his forces at all times.

The *F major Concerto* seemingly harks back to the old, *galant* style of Mozart's Salzburg concertos prior to the *E flat, K. 271*, which is always cited as the first of his great piano concertos. However, its form and plan though of the old homogeneous type is really deceptive. His first movement at first does not sound dramatic with its lyrical themes but as it unfolds one finds its drama manifested. The slow movement does not aim for depth but owns an expressive loveliness quite in keeping with its composer. The finale is the finest part of the work—an Italian rondo with its main theme a true courtly minuet which Mozart handles most imaginatively. *K. 413* is a work that grows on one with repeated hearings, and I, for one, am grateful that Miss Rivkin has revived it. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Flute Concerto No. 1 in G, K. 313*; *Flute Concerto No. 2 in D, K. 314*; Hubert Barwahse! (Flute) and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by John Pritchard. Epic LP LC-3033. \$5.95.

April, 1954

▲THE MAJOR competition for this *K. 313* is provided by another Viennese, Wanaussek (Vox), Wummer (Columbia), and two Frenchmen, Rampal and Marseau (Period). Aurele Nicolet has also made an acceptable version of the *D major Concerto* (Concert Hall). Barwahser's advantage over the others consists mainly in the best orchestral accompaniment and the best recording balance, which is unusual for Epic. As a performer he has little to offer in the way of a strong musical personality. His tempi are well chosen, his execution extremely competent. His tone, however, is somewhat pale and lacking in character. It does not have the warm earthiness of the Frenchmen nor the unusual and individual Pan-like quality of Wanaussek. For the layman who just wants to listen to these Concerti, I would recommend this Epic release because of its well-balanced full sound. Students of the flute will probably single out Wanaussek

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—A.W.P.

SCHUMANN: *Cello Concerto in A Minor, Op. 129*; **TCHAIKOVSKY:** *Variations on a Rococo Theme for Cello and Orchestra, Op. 33*; Maurice Gendron (cello) with L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LP LL-947, \$5.95.

▲FOR the Tchaikovsky work this is a first recording on microgroove, and a welcome one, although it would be foolhardy to esteem the music among the composer's finest products. The Schumann has been done more often than it seems to merit. Perhaps the closest competitive version is Schuster's on Capitol, which also offers the Bruch *Kol Nidrei* and a Christian Bach concerto in quite acceptable performances. Gendron already has been heard to advantage on the London label. His playing is clean and, if not lush, at least ingratiating, and always very musical. All things considered I should say his Schumann is the best of the lot. Certainly this disc has the most spacious sound by a sizable margin, and Ansermet elicits a good crisp ritornel on both sides.
—J.L.

Chamber Music

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 3 in E Flat, Op. 12, No. 3*; *Sonata No. 5 in F, Op. 24* ("Spring"); Jean Fournier (violin) and Ginette Doyen (piano). Westminster LP WL-5247, \$5.95.

▲WESTMINSTER continues its notable series of Beethoven sonata recordings. The performances are, as before, contentaneous in the extreme and thoroughly musical. The matter of instrumental balance in these works has never been settled beyond further question. There is evidence that Beethoven did not intend for the violin and piano to participate as equals. On the strength of this, one might prefer, say, the recent

Heifetz performances, in which the pianist is relegated to the role of a mere accompanist. Myself, I prefer to have the collaborators really collaborate. That was the glory of the Fuchs-Balsam series, which is the only other complete set of these works currently in the catalogues. But the Decca surfaces were pretty noisy for the most part, and the sound was more studio-ish than truly intimate. Westminster has caught the magical presence of ideal chamber music-making, and the present executants are as competent as they are dedicated. The music is not "interpreted." It is just played—perfectly.
—J.L.

●
BRAHMS: *Quintet in B minor for Clarinet and Strings, Op. 115*; Alfred Boskovsky (Clarinet) and Members of the Vienna Octet. London LP LL-858, \$5.95.

▲BOSKOVSKY is a good clarinet player, undoubtedly a top symphony first-desk man, but lacking the completely defined solo presence and individuality of character that is required to lift his instrument above the all-encompassing web of intermeshed string sonorities and give it the place of importance the composer had in mind. This must be done, of course, without turning the piece into a minor clarinet concerto accompanied by strings. There is a slender path of perfection that cuts midway between the two extremes; our boy has strayed off it into the toils of his colleagues, whose wiry, earnest tones do not fill one with the over-all feeling of well-being that the genial Brahms skillfully planned to evoke.

Frankly, I feel that there is still an opening for another performance of this score, which is unquestionably one of the cornerstones of the clarinet literature. Reginald Kells style is a bit too rarified for it to be held up as a standard model. Until such time as the definitive version is obtained, this one by Boskovsky is certainly serviceable and not without certain basic merits and worth acquiring unless you are content with the version you now own.
—A.W.P.

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KREISLER: *Quartet in A minor*; **PAGANINI:** *Quartet in E major*; Stuyvesant String Quartet. Philharmonia LP 107, \$5.95.

▲**CONTRASTING** the chamber works of two great violinists, who were also reputable composers, was an ingenious idea by the Stuyvesant String Quartet. This ensemble, one of America's finest, is all too seldom heard on records and these performances are most welcome. Exceptionally well recorded, with the New Orthophonic curve, the music and the players are well served. Kreisler's *Quartet* is akin to Smetana's *Aus meinen leben*. It is an avowal of his affection and deep feeling for his native Vienna. It was written in 1919 and reflects in part the composer's deep sadness for his beloved Vienna, war-torn when he wrote it. The opening *Fantasia* owns a dramatic intensity—it is a personal confession of his memories and feeling for Vienna.

The scherzo and slow movement have considerable charm, while the finale with its dancelike movement has a contagious gaiety which is tempered with a final note of tragedy and pathos. The Paganini is quite a different piece—in many ways a miniature violin concerto. Its warm-hued Italian melodies and its striking effects provide a different type of diversion. Played with spontaneity and fervor, as it is here, it emerges as an engaging and wholly charming opus. I have never heard the Kreisler quartet better performed than it is here, and I am mindful of the earlier 78 version in which the composer played the first violin. The rhythmic fluidity and sensitivity of the Stuyvesant group in both works bring alive in a laudable way two neglected scores that are worth knowing.

—P.H.R.

●
LOEILLET: *Sonata No. 12 in F sharp minor for Cello and Harpsichord*; *Trio-Sonata No. 2 in B minor for Violin, Cello and Harpsichord*; *Sonata No. 10 in B flat for Violin and Harpsichord*; *Trio-Sonata No. 13 in G for Violin, Cello and Harpsichord*; George Ales

(Violin), Pierre Coddee (Cello) and Ruggero Gerlin (Harpsichord). L'Oiseau-Lyre LP OL-50018, \$5.95.

▲**THIS** is sober, well-behaved music, formal as an ambassador's butler and heavy as a rich, sauce-laden French dinner. Even the fast sections unreel with a sedate motion, retaining a brave show of lace-edged dignity. The slow sections, in particular, are imbued with that mystical aloofness that is one of the major ingredients of the best French church music. That this quality is apparent in Loeillet's music is somewhat astonishing, as he was a Belgian who spent most of his mature life outside of France,

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and this is not church music. These scores are played with suitable deference and insight into their requirements by three Frenchmen of exemplary training and musical taste.

—A.W.P.

•
MOZART: *Quartet in G, K. 387; Quartet in B flat, K. 589*; The Barylli Quartet. Westminster LP WL-5265, \$5.95.

MOZART: *Quartet in B flat, K. 589; Quartet in F, K. 590*; The Barchet Quartet. Vox LP PL-8260, \$5.95.

▲ONE does not need to hear more than a half dozen bars of the *K. 589* by both ensembles to realize that the Barylli Quartet has much more to offer than the Barchet. And recording-wise, the string sound in the Barylli is better which probably has as much to do with the players as the engineering. Personally, I like less reverberation in Mozart than the Westminster disc has, but this does not detract seriously from the fine performances. The Barylli Quartet is a proficient foursome; they give bright, alert and rhythmically fluent performances of both works. The Barchet's, dominated by the first violinist, have clean articulation but no feeling for nuance and little warmth or fluidity. Perhaps they were mike-shy when they played these quartets. They seem to rate a producer, whose name is on the envelope. One wonders why he endorsed the performances or why Vox bought the tapes. In the one case, we have good Mozart performances in the Viennese tradition, in the other we have German performances in the worst possible tradition.

—P.H.R.

•
MOZART: *Quintet in E flat, K. 452*;

BEETHOVEN: *Quintet in E flat, Op. 16*; Rudolf Serkin (piano) with members of the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet. Columbia LP disc ML4834, \$5.95.

▲HERE is a prime example of the power of performance. Both the works listed above, and particularly the Beethoven, have modest charm, but neither is any world beater. They do, however, seem

268

far more vibrant and touching in the hands of Serkin, and four of the superb first desk wind players of the Philadelphia Orchestra than they have ever before seemed to this listener. The playing of these dedicated musicians should not be missed by no one who cares anything at all about chamber music. Such articulation, balance, chording, and general unanimity is something one dreams about and seldom hears. Needless to say, the group has no competition in this music in the LP catalog. It is not likely to have any in the foreseeable future, either.

—C.J.L.

•
MOZART: *Trios Nos. 3 in E, K. 542 and 4 in C, K. 548*; Jean Fournier (violin), Antonio Janigro (cello) and Badura Skoda (piano). Westminster LP WL-5267, \$5.95.

▲YOUNG Badura-Skoda seems determined to drop his first name, which is Paul, and to de-hyphenate his last name so that "Badura" becomes his first name. Well, I suppose this is his prerogative. Anyway, I begin with this side issue because the recording itself already was covered, in effect, in the last issue, when the first two *Trios* of this series came under scrutiny. Again the report is that the performances are exquisite and the presence eminently realistic. No one who has heard the previous disc (WL-5242) will need any urging to acquire this sequel.

—J.L.

•
PROKOFIEV: *Sonata in D, Opus 94*;
R. STRAUSS: *Sonata in E Flat, Op. 18*; Ruggiero Ricci (violin) and Carlo Bussotti (piano). London LP LL-770, \$5.95.

▲YOUNG Ricci is a fine fiddler but he was ill advised to enter the lists with such artists as Szigeti and Stern (in the Prokofiev) or Heifetz (in the Strauss). The Prokofiev is a quite special work, one of the great masterpieces of the century, requiring no end of virtuosity and even more interpretative skill. Not even Stern succeeds with it, and Szigeti has

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his hands full with the pyrotechnics for all of his penetrating musicianship. The Heifetz transfer (Victor LCT-1122) of the Strauss is more or less successful; some surface noise obtrudes but all of his fantastic skill is at least discernible. Now comes Ricci to do battle with these titans. He simply does not have what it takes. The Strauss is lesser music but it is not much easier to play, and Ricci has his difficulties here, too, but not so many of them. The sound is almost too good, as if the mike were only inches away from the violin. More balance would have been desirable.

—J.L.

Keyboard

BACH: *Six French Suites*; Alexander Borovsky (piano). Vox LP set PL-8192 (2 discs). \$11.90.

▲BOROVSKY's recordings in the past have seldom satisfied. This latest one—beautiful in sound—will, I venture to say, make quite a few listeners happy. Borovsky plays forthrightly with a command of the mechanics and a grasp of the spirit of the Bach *French Suites*. There is no obscurity in his work, and his rhythm is solid. He brings little tonal color to this assignment (and this is typical); but then Bach needs little of that, and in fact resists too large an application. Suffice it to say that these are clear and noble performances, well ahead of any other piano performances of this music I have heard in a long time. You will have to try Valenti and his harpsichord if you want to do even a little better on records.

—C.J.L.

●
LISZT: *Consolations; Polonaise No. 2 in E flat; Dante Sonata*; Peter Katin (piano). London LP disc LL-934, \$5.95.

▲IT would seem that London has added another first class pianist to their list of artists. Peter Katin, unknown to me before this disc, is a most efficient player who appears to have everything

except that last ounce of fire and power that the poetically conceived but rather dull *Dante Sonata* and the exciting, if noisy *E flat Polonaise* require. His sensitive performances of the *Consolations* are better. Katin's playing is—to me—without the patronizing one so often associates with other accounts of these tender, faded pieces.

—C.J.L.

●
SCHUMANN: *Etudes Symphoniques*;
BRAHMS: *Variations on a Theme by Paganini*; Geza Anda (piano). Angel LP disc 35046, \$5.95 or \$4.95.

▲THOSE interested in the piano and those who keep up on Europe's musical life are undoubtedly aware of the enormous impression Geza Anda has made on his audiences. Anda, a 32-year-old Hungarian and a pupil of Dohnanyi, is on the basis of this recording, already a master player. He seems to have everything, technically speaking—full pro-



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OTHER ADS PAGES 261, 265, 273

jection from a whisper to a roar, a big color palette, dexterity uncommon even in this age, and a command of pedal technique that must be heard. He has absolutely no difficulty in handling Brahms and Schumann's splendidly thorny sets of variations. And musically, except for some teasing of tempo in the finale of the Schumann, he is a delight. If my ears do not deceive me, and his playing on this disc is representative of his average work, Anda seems to me destined to become one of the greatest players of his generation. Angel has our thanks for introducing us to Anda and an obligation to make certain we hear more of him.

I must point out, there are two serious cuts which have allowed Angel to get these two grand works onto one disc. There is a lamentable excision of three pages in the fourteenth and last variation in *Book I* of the Brahms and a cut—unnecessary perhaps of eight bars toward the end of the Schumann. In spite of that, these are the best performances of either work on LP, and the recording is unusually good. —C.J.L.

Voice

ARIAS FROM THE OPERA: *L'Arlesiana*—*Lamento di Federico* (Cilea); *Tosca*—*O dolce mani* (Puccini); *I Quattro Rusteghi*—*Luceta xe un bel nome* (Wolf-Ferrari); *Rigoletto*—*Parmi veder le lagrime* (Verdi); *Andrea Chenier*—*Come bel di di maggio* (Giordano); *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*—*Ecco ridente in cielo* (Rossini); *Falstaff*—*Dal labbro in canto* (Verdi); *L'Amico Fritz*—*Ed anche Beppe amo* (Mascagni); *La Sonnambula*—*Prendi l'anel il dono* (Bellini); Ferruccio Tagliavini (tenor) with Orchestra of Radio Italiana conducted by Ugo Tansini and Mario Rossi. Cetra LP 50155, \$5.95.

▲CAPITOL has arranged with Cetra in Italy to provide one of the best operatic recitals that Tagliavini has made to date. On the face of it, it would seem that some

of the selections were drawn from the complete opera sets in which the tenor took part, but one cannot be sure of this. How much better and how much more natural the tenor sounds in these fine recordings, in which his loud tones are not reproduced in the explosive manner of his American recordings. As for his singing, there is much to admire though his contrasts are rather exaggerated at times. He can spin a *pianissimo* that has suavity and beauty in sound, and he can and does voice a *forte* that becomes strident in comparison. I think that all his admirers will welcome this record, not alone because it brings them several new arias by the tenor, but also because he is in exceptionally fine voice. —J.N.

BRAHMS: *Alto Rhapsody*, Op. 53; Kathleen Ferrier with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir conducted by Clemens Krauss; *Gestille Sehnsucht* and *Gestille Wiegenlied*, Op. 91, Nos. 1 and 2; *Sapphische Ode*, Op. 94, No. 4; *Botschaft*, Op. 47, No. 2; Miss Ferrier with Phyllis Spurr (piano) and Max Gilbert (viola) in the Op. 91. London LP LL-903. \$5.95.

▲THE FIRST memorial issue to Kathleen Ferrier, whose untimely death on October 8th, 1953 saddened many of us as much as it must have saddened her colleagues and personal friends. Indeed, though I never knew Miss Ferrier, her death affected me like a personal loss, which is probably as fine a tribute as any critic could make. Hers was a memorable voice, full of sentient warmth, and the dignity of her presence and her artistry were rare attributes. There will be other memorial issues of her work on records, a London official tells me—a re-issue of Gluck's *Orpheus* in which she sang so beautifully.

Most of these selections were derived from 78 rpm discs but the recording hardly conveys that fact, for they compare favorably with existent LP releases. Her singing of the *Alto Rhapsody* is to me the most satisfying one on records. As Sackville-West and Shaw-Taylor say in their *Record Guide*: "There is no

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questioning the beauty and justice of Miss Ferrier's singing, or the admirable balance and clarity of the recording." Much the same can be said for her singing of two lieder with viola accompaniment, though here the balance is not quite perfect. Her *Sapphische Ode* is distinguished by her tonal loveliness and poise and the final phrases are exquisitely sung.

—P.H.R.

DONIZETTI: *L'Elisir d'amore*—Una furtiva lagrime; *La Figlia del Reggimento*—Qual destino and *Eccomi finalmente*; *Don Pasquale*—Sogno soave e casto; *Recitative* and *Chechero lontana terra*; *Come e gentil*; *Tornami a dir*; Cesare Valletti (tenor) with Sesta Bruscantini and Aldo Noni. Cetra LP 50154, \$5.95.

▲THIS disc aims to place a spotlight on the young lyric tenor, Cesare Valletti, who recently joined the Metropolitan. All these recordings were derived from the complete performances of each opera sponsored by Cetra. In all, Valletti sings with style and tonal suavity, but I have a feeling had he redone these in a studio he would have made them even more personable.

—J.N.

HINDEMITH: *Des Marienleben* (1948 edition); Jennie Tourel (mezzo-soprano) and Erich Itor Kahn (piano). Columbia SL 196, two discs, \$11.90.

▲MORE than three years have passed since Miss Tourel's memorable evenings in New York's Town Hall devoted to this imposing cycle. Those of us who had hoped for a recording, indeed, had long since given up. The gap, meanwhile, had been filled by the Canadian soprano Frances James and the pianist George Brough (Lyrachord LL-6). In one respect Miss James had the advantage, for hers is a true soprano voice, and it soars more easily to the higher reaches of the score than does Miss Tourel's mezzo. All in all, however, the preference must go to the new release. Not the least of Tourel's achievement (to sing the cycle at all demands the finest musicianship) is her mastery of the none too comfortable *tessitura*. Hers is not a voice of many colors, and to this difficulty we may perhaps lay the fact that she does not bring out more strongly the shadings expressed in Hindemith's dynamic markings. A minor blemish must in conscience be noted—she has a way of sliding into some of her more sustained tones. Mr. Kahn, as is his wont, plays magnificently. He is far better recorded than Mr. Brough, though not quite perfectly.

—P.L.M.

MOZART: *Le nozze di Figaro*—Deh vieni, non tardar; *Porgi amor*; *Voi che sapete*; *Non so piu cosa son*; *Dove sono*; *Don Giovanni*—Verdai, carino; *Non mi dir*; *Batti, batti*; *Idomeneo*—Zeffiretti lusinghieri; Elisabeth Schwarzs-

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kopf, (soprano) with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by John Pritchard. Angel 35021, \$5.95.

▲MISS SCHWARZKOPF skips lightly in this recital from one to the other of the chief female characters in *Don Giovanni* and *Figaro*. Perhaps her most striking achievement is the differentiation between the voices of the ladies. Her Countess and her Cherubino are definitely quite different people. Nothing in the set is done without stylistic distinction and thorough mastery. Naturally, there are points on which one may differ with the singer. I would like a crisper recitative preceding *Deh vieni*, and I always miss the *appoggiaturas* when they are not done in this aria. *Vedrai, carino* seems to me a little precious, and though the coloratura part of *Non mi dir* is effectively delivered, it does not have a great dramatic impact. On the other hand, the long phrases of *Dove sono*, as she manages them, might well serve as a model. The reproduction is not of the clearest, especially in side 1.

—P.L.M.

●
MONTEVERDI: *Vespers of 1610 (Vespero della Beata Vergine and Magnificat)* (ed. Schrade); Margaret Ritchie (soprano), Elsie Morrison (soprano), William Herbert (tenor), Richard Lewis (tenor), Bruce Boyce (baritone), Geraint Jones (organ), Ruggero Gerlin (harpsichord), London Singers and Ensemble Orchestral de L'Oiseau Lyre, conducted by Anthony Lewis. Oiseau-Lyre set OL 50021-22, \$11.90.

▲WITHIN the past year three recordings of this magnificent music have marked a progress from Selections to Abridged Performance to Complete Work. As performances, too, they have come in an impressive *crescendo*. Hearing the music for the first time, one could only wish Ephrikan had given us more of the score (Period 558). Grischkat, for his version (Vox PL 7902), used the Redlich edition which arbitrarily omits two of the most beautiful psalms and indulges in some extensive editing of the orchestration. For this third presentation, Lewis has

used a new edition by Leo Schrade, author of the now standard biography of Monteverdi, a scholar of integrity as well as sound learning. We may take his solutions to the various problems as more or less conclusive. For background reading the curious should refer to *The Musical Quarterly* for January 1954, in which Professor Schrade reviews the Grischkat recording. He points out that even in Malipiero's edition of the complete works the scoring of these *Vespers* is not altogether accurate, and that Redlich has followed Malipiero rather than going to the original sources.

Scholarship and authenticity aside, it is good to report that if the earlier performances brought us a thrill or two, this new one is incomparably more exciting. There is a festive atmosphere evident at the very outset, and this is sustained to the end. The chorus sings with more respect for unanimity, and the soloists are excellent. In the solos particularly, one is conscious of the sheer beauty of the words—*Nigra sum* is especially eloquent, and the *Sonata sopra Sancta Maria*, with all its fanfares, is tremendously exciting. The recording setup is very good, for no one seems to be right on top of us; there is a nice churchly kind of atmosphere. —P.L.M.

●
STRAUSS, Richard: *Four Last Songs—Beim Schlafengehen, September, Frühling, Im Abendroth*; Lisa Della Case (soprano) with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Boehm. London 10" LP LD-9072, \$4.95.

MOUSSORGSKY: *Songs and Dances of Death*; Heinz Rehfuss (baritone) with Hans Willi Haesslin at the piano. London 10" LP LD-9070, \$4.95.

RUSSIAN OPERATIC ARIAS: *Eugene Onegin—Gremi's Aria* (Tchaikovsky); *Prince Igor—Galitzsky's Aria* (Borodin); *Sadko—Song of the Viking Guest* (Rimsky-Korsakov); *A Life for the Tsar—Sussanin's Aria* (Glinka); Raphael Arie (bass) with L'Orchestre des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris conducted by Alberto Erede. London 10" LP LD-9074, \$4.95.

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▲ I WOULD urge anyone who still believes that Strauss's creative powers ebbed after *Der Rosenkavalier* (1912) to listen carefully to the *Four Last Songs*. According to his publishers, these songs are the last works which Strauss finished. Set to poems by Hermann Hesse and Eichendorff (*Im Abendrot*), each one hints at the coming of death; each carries a sense of infinite repose and tranquillity. Personally, I find few works written during the past decade so deeply moving as the song *Im Abendrot*, where soft trills from two flutes (later two piccolos) suggest the two larks mentioned in the poem. An echo of the Transfiguration motive of *Tod und Verklärung*—composed 60 years earlier—just before the end of this song cannot fail to impress the listener with a sense of creative fulfillment; how much stronger and more expressive is the later work than the earlier! Likewise, the Trio from *Der Rosenkavalier* becomes a motive of transcendence in *Beim Schlafengehen*, with an extraordinary violin obbligato that is sumptuously played on these records by the concertmaster of the Vienna Philharmonic, Willy Boskowsky. Miss Della Casa's performance may not have all the insight imaginable (I recall an even more moving performance by Viorica Ursuleac at Salzburg in 1952, with the Vienna Philharmonic under Krauss); but it is, nonetheless, perfectly beautiful. The Vienna Philharmonic under Boehm does wonders with the score.

Moussorgsky's conception of death, as revealed in these dramatic songs, is at a far remove from Strauss's. Here is the *danse macabre*, the Witches' Sabbath of every good romantic soul. Death appears, successively, to a weary peasant in the strains of a Trepak, to a child in the form of a Lullaby, to a young girl as a Serenade from her lover, and to a soldier as a Field Marshal rallying his troops after battle. The sombre, dark quality of Rehfuss's voice is admirably suited to the music, but his apparent inability to shade his tones detracts a good deal from the subtlety of the performance (which is sung in French)

April, 1954

The accompaniments and *fff* recording are excellent.

Still another London disc presents the young Yugoslav basso Raphael Arie in four favorite Russian arias. Mr. Arie is the possessor of a beautiful voice, which he uses well on this record; but he projects little personal eloquence, and the rather amorphous conducting of Erede does not materially increase enjoyment. The recording is all one could ask, save that Mr. Arie is a little too close to the mike and Mr. Erede & Co. a little too far away. —R.R.

MORE OPERA

(Continued from page 256)

waltz-tempo suggests Johann Strauss, and a few of *Boccaccio's* pages—such as the Italian love-duet between the hero



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OTHER ADS PAGES 261, 265, 269]

and heroine in the last act—might have come from the composer of *Fledermaus*. The whole, as demonstrated by these excerpts, is not quite up to this standard; but this, to borrow Dr. Johnson's phrase, doesn't seem worth quibbling about. The chief virtue common to singers, chorus and orchestra alike is their feeling for the style. The soloists, men and women, are not outstanding; their voices are frequently rather rough-edged. But let us spare criticism and give Columbia due credit for presenting a performance as acceptable as this. —R. RePass

RECORD ROUNDUP

(Continued from page 252)

▲Vox has come up with a "rediscovered" *Concerto for Two Pianos* by **Mendelssohn** (PL-8350) which is very well constructed but melodically fallow, although charming in its neo-Mozartian filigree. One suspects it will make no great impression on the existing repertory. It is well played by **Orazio Frugoni** and **Edward Mrazek** with **Hans Swarowsky** conducting the **Pro Musica Symphony** (Vienna). It is coupled with the *Capriccio Brilliant*, Op. 22 which has its attractions as a showcase. Frugoni, with the aid of Swarowsky and his orchestra, plays it handsomely. The compelling virtue of this LP is its lifelike reproduction.

Andor Foldes plays **Schumann's** great *Fantasia* in C, Op. 17 and **Brahms' Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 21, No. 1 (Decca DL-9708) and the veteran **Edwin Fischer** plays the **Schumann Fantasia** and **Brahms' Sonata in F** major, Op. 5 (HMV 1065). Aside from the stimulating *Brahms Variations* (available for the first time on LP) which is excellently recorded, you can do better on the rest of the music in question. The *Fantasia* is poorly recorded in the Decca disc (boxed-in sound) and the HMV disc has artificial piano tone and poor definition. The playing of Foldes is tidy, more or less faithful to the texts, but lacking in spontaneity and warmth. Fischer's physical powers have diminished to a point that he is unable to cope with the second movement of the **Schumann Fantasia** or the third movement of the **Brahms Sonata**. Recommended: Demus in the *Fantasy* (Westminster 5157) and **Katchen** (London LL-122) or **Rubinstein** (Victor LM-1189) in the *Sonata*.**

Moskowsky, who is best known for his salon pieces, was in his day a noted piano virtuoso and later a successful teacher. His *Concerto in E*, Op. 59, which contains some lovely music even if it is derivative, has found its way to records at long last. It is well played by **Hannes Kann**, **Walter Goehr** and the **Netherlands Philharmonic** (Concert Hall Society 1197). Though

echoes of **Grieg**, **Mendelssohn**, **Schumann** and **Chopin** are present, they are not strong to efface entirely the delicacy and polish which are earmarks of **Moskowsky's** style. One suspects that the composer made more of his part than **Kann** does, but the latter certainly handles its technical difficulties with apparent ease. Here is a romantic token of bygone days which some, we are sure, will enjoy.

A group of Scandinavian works—**Svendens's Carnival in Paris** and an *Elegie* from one of his suites, **Alfven's Midsummer Vigil**, **Sibelius' Romance in C**, Op. 42, and **Nielsen's Dance of the Cockerels**—is performed by the **Royal Opera House Orchestra**, **John Hillingsworth** conducting (MGM-E3082). The **Svendens Carnival** is of little musical consequence. The **Alfven** is much better played by the **Cincinnati** on a London disc. The remaining pieces are innocuous enough but too short to warrant comment. Good recording.

POPS SPOTLIGHT

●MONTH'S BEST is RCA Victor's LPT-6000, which assembles 24 off-the-air recordings transferred from acetates made by **Artie Shaw** in 1938 and 1939. Those years were big ones for swing, and **Shaw** was just about the biggest man in the business. A decade and a half has not tarnished the gleaming freshness of his arrangements, or at least that was my impression. The current generation may not find **Shaw's Nightmare**, *Stardust*, *Begin the Beguine* or *My Reverie* particularly exciting, but anyone who spent the thirties in high school and college is bound to drop a nostalgic tear. The reproduction is very much acceptable by today's standards, luckily enough. My only regret is that *Frenesi*—perhaps **Shaw's** finest achievement—is unaccountably not included.

CAPITOL has issued the most startling novelties this time. On a boxed LP (LAL-486) **Les Baxter** offers his own omnibus work, *The Passions*, with **Bas Sheva** handling the, ah, for want of a better term, the vocal end. The "passions" traversed are, in this order, despair, ecstasy, hate, lust, terror, jealousy and joy. The overtones of these emotions are captured with amazing persuasiveness by the soloist, and the reproduction, let me tell you, is something to hear. It is Capitol's best sound, with glorious highs and furniture-rattling lows. Another Capitol disc is understandably less endowed with hi-fi: *Birth of a Baby*, it's called (H-480) and that is just what it is, straight from the delivery room of a Wisconsin hospital. As documentaries go, this one is a knockout. What will they think of next? By way of answering my own question, there is **Brunswick's** BL-58054, on which **Larry Elgart** and his ensemble offer *Impressions of Outer Space*. Science fiction readers are commended to the likes of *Asteroid Ballet*, *Primordial Matter* and *Purple Planet*. To these

The American Record Guide

ears it's just out of this world, and that's a joke, son. If Stan Kenton hears it, he'll sue.

DECCA CONTINUES its splendid *Curtain Call* series. Volume VI (DL-7026) contains two souvenirs each by Connie Boswell (*Martha, Stormy Weather*), Frances Langford (*Then You've Never Been Blue, Baltimore Oriole*), Ella Fitzgerald (*A-Tisket A-Tasket, Undecided*), and Mildred Bailey (*Rockin' Chair, Georgia on my Mind*). Ah, yesterday. . .

INTERNATIONAL stuff has been accumulating. Angel tops the list with a recital by *Les Compagnons de la Chanson* on ABL-64000; the jolly troubadours are especially convincing in *La Chanson du Celibataire (The Bachelor's Song)* although the nine of them may have three dozen children among them for all I know. On an Elektra (EKL-9) disc, Shep Ginandes (who is a physician in Boston when he is not riding his hobby) sings a charming batch of *French Traditional Songs*. The engineering on this is particularly good, and the good doctor is an artful amateur indeed. Also well engineered, but this time sung professionally, are four exceptional Columbia collections: on ML-4778 the incomparable Patachou is heard to close-up advantage in such goodies as *Domino* and *Les Amoureux des Banques Publiques*. On ML-4779 there is Edith Piaf, or *La Mome* as she is affectionately and rightly called, in a round dozen numbers of quality, among them *Coup de Grisou* and *Histoires de Coeur*. On ML-4780 there is another dozen by Jacqueline Francoise; she calls them *American Favorites*, which presumably means that the tourists like them. I did, too, even though I hadn't heard more than two or three. Try *Melancholie* or *Jesabel* for something different. The fourth Columbia disc is called *Sing Gypsies* (ML-4836) and it introduces Sari Barabas with Kalman Lendvay's orchestra. This Hungarian colorature has voice to spare, and her projection of these Magyar ballads is a joy to jaded sensitivities. Another gypsy item is Volume II of Westminster's series by Antal Koczé and his Vienna cafe orchestra (WL-3012). This is not the second issue of the gypsy songs, five of which are already on the market, but rather the second of a concurrent set given over mostly to *csardas*. Scintillating stuff, every minute of it.

ST. PATRICK's day is behind us now, but Columbia's Frank Parker recital (CL-6280) is sure to be a year-round favorite anyhow. He sings 15 lyric emeralds, ranging from *Galway Bay to Macushla*, and each of them sparkles like the dew on a shamrock. While we are travel-conscious, let us not forget Capitol's happy round-up of *The Songs of Polynesia* (H-483), Cynthia Gooding's exquisite recitals of English, Mexican, Turkish and Spanish songs (respectively Elektra EKL's 11, 8 and, coupling the last two, EKL-6). The Elektra sound is extremely spacious, and the singing is superb of its kind. Dial's 401, 402 and 403 are, in that order, adventures in Trinidad calypso, the dances of Martinique, and Port of Spain's talking drums. The first of these will

enthrall anyone whose background is limited to *Rum and Coca-Cola*. The latter two are exciting fare indeed as ethnic studies, and no less listenable as pure jazz, which indeed they are. Two last international discs: Decca has re-issued a program by the dulcet-voiced Elvira Rios (DL-5238) called *Tropic Nights*; I am not sure that Mexico and Cuba are properly called tropical countries, but these familiar airs (*Perfidia, Murmullo*) are languour itself. MGM has a recital by the huskily sultry Odette (E-239) who offers such favorites as *Under Paris Skies* and *Goodbye Darling, Hello Friend* with the aid of Johnny Guarneri's orchestra. This is a talented lady, even if her style seems more suited to a chromium-plated carban than it does to a smoky little *boite*. —JAS.

NEW RELEASES for April

ALFVEN: *Swedish Rhapsody*; SVENDSEN: *Car-nival in Paris*; Royal Opera House Orch. (Hollingsworth). MGM-E-3082.

AMIROV: *Caucasian Dances*; ARENSKY: *Sil-houettes, Op. 73 (Suite No. 2)*; LIADOV: *Baba Yaga, Op. 56*; Radio Leipzig Sym. Orch. (Abendroth). Urania 7117.

BACH: *Canonic Vars. on "Von Himmel Hoch"; Vars. on "O Gott du frommer Gott"; 6 Choral Fughetta; 5 Choral Preludes*; Finn Videro. Haydn Soc. HSL-94.

BACH: *Christmas Oratorio*; Soloists, Detmold Academy Choir & Orch. (Thomas). Oiseau Lyre 50001/03.

BACH: *Concerto in D mi. for 2 Violins*; Krebbers. Olof, Hague Phil. Orch. (van Otterloo). BEE-THOVEN: *Romances 1 & 2. Epic 3036*.

BACH: *Partita in E minor; Sonata No. 3 in E (harpichord & violin); Sonata in G mi. for Violin*; Stern & Zakin. Columbia ML-4862.

BACH: *Prelude and Fugue in E mi.; Prelude and Fugue in G; Toccata, Adagio and Fugue in C*; Egginton (organ). Oiseau Lyre 50012.

BACH: *Sonata in E mi. (flute); Sonata in G (violin); Trio in D mi. (flute, oboe, harpsichord); Trio in G (flute, violin and harpsichord)*; Redel, Grehling, Lechner, Winschermann. Oiseau Lyre 50015.

BALAKIREV: *Tamar—Symphonic Poem*; RIM-SKY-Korsakov: *Ivan the Terrible—Suite*; London Sym. Orch. (Fistoulari). MGM-E-3076.

BARTOK: *Bagatelles, Op. 6; Roumanian Folk Dances; Roumanian Christmas Carols; Kozma (piano)*. Bartok 918.

BARTOK: *Concerto No. 3 for Piano*; PRO-KOFIEV: *Concerto No. 3 in C, Op. 26*; Pen-

- nario, St. Louis Sym. Orch. (Golschmann). Capitol P-8253.
- BARTOK:** *For Children. Vols. 1 and 2;* Kozma (piano). Bartok 919/920.
- BARTOK:** *Hungarian Folk Songs; Songs Op. 16;* Valery (mezzo), Goehr (piano). Allegro 4020.
- BEETHOVEN:** *Missa Solemnis, Op. 123;* Soloists' Shaw Chorale. NBC Sym. Orch. (Toscanini). Victor LM-6013 (2 12").
- BEETHOVEN:** *Sonatas No. 8, Op. 13 (Pathetique)' No. 14, Op. 27, No. 2 (Moonlight), No. 23, Op. 57 (Appassionata);* Badura Skoda (piano)' West. 5184.
- BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata Nos. 7 and 8, Op. 30, Nos. 2 and 3;* Francescotti and Casadesus. Columbia ML-4861.
- BENEVOLI:** *Festival Mass for 53 Parts; Hymn for St. Rupert;* Soloists, Salzburg Domchor Vienna Sym. Orch. (Messner). Epic 3035'
- BERG:** *Concerto for Violin;* Krasner, Cleveland Orch. (Rodzinski); **SCHOENBERG:** *Concerto for Violin;* Krasner, Phil. Sym. Orch. of N. Y. (Mitropoulos). Columbia ML-4857
- BERLIOZ:** *L'Enfance du Christ, Op. 25;* Soloists, Choral Art Soc., Little Sym. Orch. (Schermann). Columbia SL-199 (2 12").
- BERNERS:** *Music for Piano;* Pressler; **LAMBERT:** *Concerto for Piano and 9 Instruments;* Pressler, etc. (Bloomfield). MGM-E-3081)
- BIZET:** *Jeux d'Enfants, Op. 22; Fair Maid of Perth—Suite;* **CHABRIER:** *Pastorale Suite;* Orch. Paris Conservatoire (Lindenberg). London LL-871.
- BLOW:** *Venus and Adonis;* Soloists, Oiseau Lyre Ensemble (Lewis). Oiseau Lyre 50004.
- BRAHMS:** *Concerto in D for Violin, Op. 77;* Olevsky, Natl. Sym. Orch. (Mitchell). West. 5273.
- BRAHMS:** *Quartet No. 1 in C mi., Op. 51, No. 1;* **DVORAK:** *Quartet No. 3 in E fl., Op. 97;* Budapest Quartet. Columbia ML-4799.
- BRAHMS:** *Quintet in B mi., Op. 115; (Clarinet) MOZART:* *Quintet in A, K. 581 (Clarinet),* Faasshaus, Classic String Quartet. Classic 1061
- BRAHMS:** *Symphony No. 2, Op. 73;* Vienna Phil. Orch. (Schuricht). London LL-867
- BRAHMS:** *Tragic Overture, Op. 81; Variations on Theme by Haydn, Op. 56a;* **HAYDN:** *Symphony No. 102 in B flat;* Phil. Sym. Orch. of N. Y. (Walter). Columbia ML-4814.
- BRAHMS:** *Vier ernste Gesaenge, Op. 121;* **SCHUMANN:** *Liederkreis, Op. 39;* Warfield and Herz. Columbia ML-4860.
- CAPLET:** *The Mask of the Red Death;* **McDONALD:** *From Childhood Suite;* Stockton (harp). Concert Arts Orch. (Slatkin). Capitol P-8255.
- CASELLA:** *Italia, Op. 11;* Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. (Kleinert); *Serenade for Small Orch.;* Radio Leipzig Sym. Orch. (Kegel). Urania 7118.
- CHARBONNIERES:** *Pieces de Clavecin;* **COUPERIN:** *Pieces de Clavecin;* Pinkham (harpsichord). Classic 1054.
- CHOPIN:** *Ballades and other Piano Music;* de Groot (piano). Epic 3037.
- CHOPIN:** *Polish Songs, Op. 74;* Conrad (bass)' Jackson (piano). Vox 8310.
- CRESTON:** *Quartet for Strings;* **TURINA:** *Oracion del Torero;* **WOLF:** *Italian Serenade;* Hollywood String Qt. Capitol P-8260.
- DELIUS:** *A Mass of Life;* Soloists, Royal Phil. Orch. (Beecham). Col. SL-197 (2 12").
- DITTERSDORF:** *Three Partitas for Wind Quintet;* French Wind Quintet; **PLEYEL:** *Symphony Concertante No. 5;* French Wind Quintet and Orch. (de Froment). Oiseau Lyre 50014.
- FALLA:** *Nights in the Gardens of Spain;* **GRIEG:** *Concerto in A mi., Op. 16;* G. Novaes (piano), Pro Musica Sym. Orch. (Swarowsky). Vox 8520.
- FALLA:** *Three Cornered Hat Dances;* **PROKOFIEV:** *Chout Ballet;* St. Louis Sym. Orch. (Golschmann). Capitol P-8257.
- FAURE:** *La Bonne Chanson;* **GOUNOD:** *Blondina (Song Cycle);* Cuenod (tenor) Holletschek (piano). West. 5278.
- FOSS:** *A Parable of Death;* Zorina (Narrator); **MARTINU:** *Intermezzo;* **MILHAUD:** *Kentuckiana;* Louisville Orch. (Whitney). Columbia ML-4859.
- GLAZOUNOV:** *Scenes de Ballet, Op. 52; Valses de Concert Nos. 1 and 2;* Bolshoi Sym. Orch. (Gauk). Period 596.
- GLIERE:** *Concerto for Horn and Orch., Op. 91;* **GLINKA:** *Jota Aragonesa;* **PROKOFIEV:** *Stone Flower Ballet;* Bolshoi Theatre Orch. Classic 3001.
- GRANADOS:** *Goyescas;* Falgarona (piano.) Vox 8580.
- GRIEG:** *Lyric Suite, Op. 54;* **REESSEN:** *Himmerland—Danish Rhapsody;* Danish State Radio Orch. (Tuxen and Reesen) 10". London LS-849.
- HAYDN:** *Quartet in G mi., Op. 74, No. 2;* **VERDI:** *Quartet;* Roma Quartet. Urania 7-20.
- HAYDN:** *Symphony No. 53 (Imperial);* Symphony No. 67; Vienna Sym. Orch. (Sacher). Epic 3038.
- HERBERT:** *Naughty Marietta;* McRae, Piazza, Orch. (Greeley). 10" Capitol L-468.
- HINDEMITH:** *Quintet for Winds;* **POULENC:** *Sextet for Piano and Winds;* Fine Art Wind

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Players, Lurie (Piano). Capitol P-8258.

HINDEMITH: *Sonata for Piano 4 Hands*; **STRAVINSKY:** *Concerto for 2 Pianos*; **DEBUSSY:** *Epigraphes Antiques*; Gold and Fildale, Columbia SL-198 (3 12").

d'INDY: *Istar Variations, Op. 42; Colonne Concerts* Orch. (Sebastian); **RIMSKY-KORSAKOV:** *Russian Easter Overture*; Kitezh Suite; Bavarian Sym. Orch. (Graunke). Urania 7115.

KHACHATURIAN: *Concerto for Cello*; Posegga, Radio Leipzig Sym. Orch. (Kempe); **SHOSTAKOVICH:** *Concerto for Piano, Op. 35*; Pinter, Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. (Wand). Urania 7119.

KORNGOLD: *Concerto for Violin*; **LALO:** *Symphonie Espagnole*; Heifetz, Los Angeles Phil. Orch. (Wallenstein). Victor LM-1782.

LOEILLET: *Sonata in B fl.* (Violin and Harpsichord); Ales and Gerlin; *Sonata in F sh. mi.* (Cello and Harpsichord); Coddee and Gerlin; Trio Sonatas in G mi. and B mi.; Ales, Coddee, Gerlin. Oiseau Lyre 50018.

MENDELSSOHN: *Prelude and Fugue in C mi.*; *Sonatas Nos. 1, 3, 6, Op. 65* (Organ); Egginton. Oiseau Lyre 50013.

MENDELSSOHN: *Cello Sonatas No. 1 in B fl., Op. 45 and No. 2 in D, Op. 58*; N. and J. Graudan. Vox 8500.

MENDELSSOHN: *Songs without Words, Vol. 3*; Doyen (piano). West. 5279.

MONTEVERDI: *Vespro della Beata Vergine and Magnificat*; Soloists, Chorus, Oiseau Lyre Orch. Ensemble (Lewis). Oiseau Lyre 50021/22.

MOZART: *Adagio, K. 356, Adagio and Allegro K. 594, Andante, K. 616; Fantasy and Fugue, K. 608*; Ellsasser (organ). MGM-E-3075.

MOZART: *Adagio and Rondo, K. 617; Andante (Flute and Orch.), K. 315; Concerto in C (Flute & Harp), K. 299*; Waunausk, Jellinek, Pro Musica Cham. Orch. Vox 8550.

MOZART: *Cassazione for Oboe, Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon; Quintet in E fl., K. 452*; French Instrumentalists. Oiseau Lyre 50016.

MOZART: *Concerto in D, K. 271a*; (Violin);

VAINBERG: *Moldavian Rhapsody*; **VLADIGEROV:** *Fantasy on Bulgarian Dance Theme "Khere"*; Oistrakh (violin), USSR State Orch. and piano. Classic 3002.

MOZART: *Divertimento in D, K. 334*; Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet. West. 5276.

MOZART: *Quartet in D, K. 499; Quartet in E, K. 575*; Juilliard Str. Qt. Columbia ML-4863.

MOZART: *Sonatas for Violin, K. 301, K. 304, K. 378, K. 379*; de Klijn and Heksch. Epic 3034.

MOZART: *Symphonies No. 18, K. 130; No. 19, K. 132; No. 20, K. 133; No. 21, K. 134*; Netherlands Phil. Orch. (Ackermann). Concert Hall 1193.

MOZART: *Symphony No. 25, K. 183*; Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. (Egk); **BACH:** *Suite No. 1 in C*; Radio Berlin Cham. Orch. (Haarth). Urania 7-33.

PERGOLESI: *4 Concertinos*; Lamoureux Con-

certs Orch. (Colombo). Oiseau Lyre 50010.

PEZEL: *Tower and Festive Music* (17th Century); Brass Ensemble (Schuller). EMS 7.

PROKOVIEV: *Cinderella Suite No. 2; Romeo and Juliet Suite No. 3*; Bolshoi Sym. Orch. (Stasevitch). Concert Hall 1304.

PURCELL: *Suites for Harpsichord*; Isabelle Nef. Oiseau Lyre 50011.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: *Capriccio Espagnole, Op. 34; TCHAIKOVSKY:* *Capriccio Italien, Op. 45*; Andante cantabile; Philadelphia Orch. (Ormandy). Columbia ML-4856.

SAINT-SAENS: *Septet for Piano, Strings and Trumpet, Op. 65*; **d'INDY:** *Suite for Trumpet, 2 Flutes and Strings, Op. 24*; Pressler, Glass, Gullet Quartet. MGM-E-3096.

SCHUBERT: *Fantasia in C, Op. 15 (Wanderer); Dances*; K. U. Schnabel (piano). WCFM 17.

SCHUBERT: *Quartet No. 13 in A mi.; Op. 29; Quartet No. 14 in D mi. (Death and the Maiden); Quartet No. 15 in G, Op. 161*; Budapest Quartet. Columbia SL-194 (3 12").

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 4 in C mi. (Tragic); Symphony No. 5 in B fl.*; London Phil. Orch. (Dixon). West. 5274.

SCHUBERT: *Symphony No. 4 in C mi.; Symphony No. 8 in B mi. (Unfinished)*; Hewitt Orch. Haydn Soc. 89.

SCHUMANN: *Fantasia in C, Op. 17; Symphonie Etudes, Op. 13*; Yves Nat (piano). Haydn Soc. 87.

STRAUSS: *Don Juan, Op. 20; Till Eulenspiegel, Op. 28*; Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orch. (Jochum); **LISZT:** *Les Preludes*; Hague Phil. Orch. (van Otterloo). Epic 3032.

TURINA: *Canto a Sevilla; Danzas Fantasticas; Oracion del Torero; Procession del Rocio*; Madrid Sym. Orch. (Branco). West. 5272.

WAGNER: *Symphony in C*; Radio Leipzig Sym. Orch. (Plueger); *Polonia Overture*; Radio Berlin Sym. Orch. (Guhll). Urania 7611.

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INDICES

The American Record Guide

INDEX — Vol. 19, 50c

INDEX — Vol. 18, 50c

INDEX — Vol. 17, 50c

INDEX — Vol. 16, 35c

INDEX — Vol. 15, 25c

INDEX — Vol. 14, 25c

INDEX — Vol. 13, 20c

INDEX — Vol. 12, 20c

INDEX — Vol. 11, 15c

INDEX — Vol. 10, 15c

INDEX — Vol. 9, 15c

INDEX — Vol. 8, 20c

INDEX — Vol. 7, 20c

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